

PREFACE BY THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE



“In my view, the success in the governance and administration of the courts lies in three anchors – visionary leadership, strategic planning and effective implementation.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

The Subordinate Courts handle more than 95% of all court cases in Singapore. In absolute terms, this is an average per year of approximately 251,000 criminal cases, 79,000 civil cases, 18,000 matrimonial cases and 36,000 small claims.

In these uncertain times and with our nation facing unprecedented challenges ahead, the Subordinate Courts must remain a firm anchor in the administration of justice. This is crucial for our nation’s continued stability and progress. Over the last 13 years, the Subordinate Courts have initiated fundamental judicial and administrative reforms which have enhanced public trust and confidence in the judicial system, protected public interests and ensured public access to justice. The Subordinate Courts have begun the process of institutionalising their best practices and entrenching their core values so as to ensure the sustainability of our judicial system in the long term, and to be a firm anchor in troubled and uncertain times. The Subordinate Courts must continue to be a first class judiciary, no matter how the external environment changes. Our judges and officers must continue to be of the highest calibre. We must continue to strive towards individual and organisational excellence. Our fundamental duties to the nation and society to provide stability and the assurance that the rule of law prevails and shall continue to prevail, demand nothing less. We must and will always remain true to our calling – to anchor justice in this land.

**THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
YONG PUNG HOW**

THE SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE'S MESSAGE



“Our enduring task is to uphold the rule of law through the fair administration of justice. Our nation expects and deserves nothing less.”

The 12th Subordinate Courts Workplan was set against a backdrop of uncertainty and unprecedented challenges for our island nation. The Honourable the Chief Justice reminded us that it was during such times that the foundation of our government and the strength of our institutional values are put to the ultimate test. His Honour went on to challenge us thus: “The Subordinate Courts have initiated fundamental judicial and administrative reforms over the past 12 years. The challenge now is to anchor these reforms and initiatives. It is only with a firm anchor in justice, and the due process of justice, that we can uphold the rule of law in the land as our nation traverses these troubled times.”

We have carefully reviewed and enhanced each of our justice frameworks and processes and our governance structure. Our enduring task is to uphold the rule of law through the fair administration of justice. Our nation expects and deserves nothing less.

We have met the challenges and kept faith with our task. This Annual Report is testimony of this.

Dignus Honore

SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE
RICHARD MAGNUS

SUBORDINATE COURTS 12TH WORKPLAN 2003/2004



“The effective implementation of your Workplan is key to the attainment of the mission, objectives and goals laid down in your Justice Statement. Our constitutional duty demands no less.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

ANCHORING JUSTICE

The Annual Workplan sets out the challenges which the Subordinate Courts will face in the coming year and the goals to be achieved.

The Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004, *Anchoring Justice*, was launched on 17 May 2003. The Keynote Address was delivered by The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How.

In the Keynote Address, His Honour announced major initiatives to be undertaken by the various Subordinate Courts Justice Divisions in the areas of case management, enhancing access to justice, knowledge management, procedural reforms, the provision of services to the community, strategic planning and effective implementation of plans.

“The administration of justice is as much a pragmatic enterprise as it is an idealistic endeavour. The Judiciary is an institution which represents the embodiment of ideals far greater than its parts. The Judiciary gives practical expression to our fundamental liberties. Above it all, the Judiciary must guard against the obstruction to justice, or more accurately, access to justice. We must strive to ensure that the public, and especially those who are indigent, can seek the redress available through the judicial process.”

... The Subordinate Courts have in place a set of core values: accessibility; expedition and timeliness; equality, fairness and integrity; independence and accountability; and public trust and confidence. Work processes may change over time, but these values must endure.

... In my view, the success in the governance and administration of the courts lies in three anchors – visionary leadership, strategic planning and effective implementation.

... As history has proven, I am confident that our leaders and our citizenry will walk through this solemn voyage with courage, fortitude, and confidence in the administration of justice. I have the faith that the Senior District Judge and each one of you in the Subordinate Courts will serve the ends of justice well in these trying times. Our task is to uphold the rule of law through the fair administration of justice. Our gratitude to our forefathers, duty to posterity, and allegiance to our nation, make it imperative that we perform this task faithfully. Let the rule of law rest upon the anchor of justice.”

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

“The Subordinate Courts have in place a set of core values: accessibility; expedition and timeliness; equality, fairness and integrity; independence and accountability; and public trust and confidence. Work processes may change over time, but these values must endure.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE COURTS

1. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COURTS

The Subordinate Courts are constituted by the Subordinate Courts Act (Cap 321) and derive their judicial powers from Article 93 of the Constitution. They comprise the District Courts, the Magistrates’ Courts, the Coroner’s Court, the Juvenile Court and the Small Claims Tribunals, and deal with more than 95 percent of all judicial matters in Singapore.

Certain District Courts and Magistrates’ Courts are designated as specialist courts, such as the Criminal Mentions Courts, the Commercial Civil and Criminal Courts, the Family Mentions Court, the Family Court, the Traffic Court, the Centralised Sentencing Court, the Special Sentencing Court, the Filter Court and the Night Courts. The e@dr Centre and the Multi-Door Courthouse are also integral parts of the Subordinate Courts. As at 31 December 2003, there are a total of 45 District and Magistrates’ Courts, 29 hearing chambers in the Civil, Crime and Family Registries as well as five settlement chambers in the e@dr Centre.

The Senior District Judge has immediate supervision of all the District Judges, Magistrates and staff of the Subordinate Courts. With effect from 1 August 2002, the Singapore Legal Service has recognised five leadership positions in the Subordinate Courts as Head of Department positions. They comprise four Principal District Judges and the Registrar; and assist the Senior District Judge in the management and administration of the Family and Juvenile Justice Division, the Criminal Trial Courts Division, the Civil Justice Division, the Criminal Mentions, Night Courts and Commercial Courts Division and the Registry of the Subordinate Courts.

The President of the Republic of Singapore appoints the Senior District Judge, District Judges, Magistrates, Coroners and Referees of the Small Claims Tribunals on the recommendation of The Honourable the Chief Justice. The Registrar and the Deputy Registrars are appointed by The Honourable the Chief Justice and oversee the running of the Civil, Crime and Family Registries of the Subordinate Courts. Each District Judge and Magistrate of the Subordinate Courts is also concurrently appointed as Deputy Registrar, Coroner and Referee of the Small Claims Tribunals. Before exercising the functions of their respective offices, they are required to take and subscribe to an oath of office and allegiance, in which they pledge to faithfully discharge all judicial duties, without fear or favour, affection or ill will to the best of their abilities to all manner of people after the laws and usages of the Republic of Singapore.

Under the Group Management of Cases (GMC) scheme, the various courts are divided into groups. Each group is overseen by a Group Manager, who is a District Judge of seniority. As at 31 December 2003, there are nine GMC Groups. They consist of six groups of Criminal Courts, the Civil Trial Courts group and the Family and Juvenile Courts group. The e@dr Centre forms one GMC Group. All the Principal District Judges, Group Managers, the Registrar and the Senior Referees of the Small Claims Tribunals report to the Senior District Judge. The Senior District Judge in turn is directly accountable to The Honourable the Chief Justice.

2. THE JURISDICTION OF THE COURTS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The District Courts

The criminal jurisdiction of the Subordinate Courts is defined in the Criminal Procedure Code (Cap 68). In criminal cases, a District Court can hear and try



SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE WITH
PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGES

(from left to right)
 PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE WONG KEEN ONN
 SENIOR DEPUTY REGISTRAR JAMES LEONG
 PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE KOH JUAT JONG
 SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE RICHARD MAGNUS
 PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE FRANCIS G REMEDIOS
 PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE FOO TUAT YIEN
 Not in picture: Registrar Lau Wing Yum (on course)

offences where the maximum term of imprisonment provided by law does not exceed 10 years or which are punishable with a fine only. It has the power to pass a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding seven years, a fine not exceeding \$10,000, caning up to 12 strokes and in appropriate cases, reformatory training, corrective training and preventive detention. Where the law expressly provides, the District Court has the jurisdiction to try offences and impose the full punishment even where the maximum sentence exceeds the limits defined by the Criminal Procedure Code.

The Magistrates' Courts

A Magistrates' Court has the authority to hear and try offences for which the maximum term of imprisonment does not exceed three years or which are punishable with a fine only. It has the power to sentence a person to a term of up to two years' imprisonment, a fine of \$2,000 and up to six strokes of the cane. Where the law expressly provides, the Magistrates' Court has the jurisdiction to try offences and impose sentences which exceed the above limits.

CIVIL JUSTICE

The Civil Trial Courts

The civil jurisdiction and powers of the Subordinate Courts are defined in the Subordinate Courts Act (Cap 321). A District Court can deal with civil claims not exceeding \$250,000 in value. It also has the power to deal with probate matters not exceeding \$3 million, grant equitable remedies, and execute and enforce trusts. In contrast, the civil jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Courts is limited to contract and tortious claims where the amounts in dispute do not exceed \$60,000.

The Small Claims Tribunals

The jurisdiction and powers of the Small Claims Tribunals are governed by the Small Claims Tribunals Act (Cap 308). The Small Claims Tribunals hear disputes arising from contracts for the sale of goods

or the provision of services and any claim in tort in respect of damage caused to any property, where the amount in dispute does not exceed \$10,000. The jurisdiction does not extend to a claim in respect of damage caused to any property by an accident arising out of or in connection with the use of a motor vehicle. Where the amount in dispute exceeds \$10,000 but not \$20,000, the parties to the dispute can agree in writing to have the case heard by the Small Claims Tribunals.

FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Family Court

The Family Court hears matters such as divorce, division of matrimonial assets, custody, maintenance, adoption of children and guardianship of infants. With effect from 1 August 1999, where there is a marriage under Muslim law or a marriage between Muslim parties, the Family Court has concurrent jurisdiction with the Syariah Court to deal with matters relating to maintenance, custody and the division of property upon the dissolution of the marriage. The Family Court also hears applications for personal protection orders, expedited personal protection orders as well as domestic exclusion orders. In addition, orders for maintenance made by the High Court and the Tribunal for the Maintenance of Parents are also dealt with by the Family Court.

The Juvenile Court

The jurisdiction and the powers of the Juvenile Court is conferred by the Children and Young Persons Act (Cap 38). The Juvenile Court hears and tries all offences committed by a child or a young person under the age of 16 years, save where the child or young person has committed an offence that is only triable by the High Court or where he has been jointly charged with another person who has attained the age of 16 years. The Juvenile Court also has powers to deal with children who are beyond parental control and those who need care and protection.

3. SPECIALISED COURTS

The Commercial Courts Cluster

The Commercial Courts Cluster deals with complex civil and criminal litigation. Civil disputes involving emerging areas such as technology, intellectual property and life sciences, for example, are handled by this Cluster. The Cluster hears offences relating to commercial crime, financial fraud, money laundering, computer crimes, intellectual property, foreign commercial crime related assistance and the confiscation of assets; as well as cases of corruption, special drug offences, outraging of modesty and rape offences. The Cluster also deals with all interlocutory matters relating to financial fraud, money laundering and confiscation of assets.

The Criminal Mentions Courts

The Criminal Mentions Courts are the first courts in which accused persons formally appear and they mark the beginning of the criminal trial process. An accused person is produced at a Criminal Mentions Court when the prosecution is ready to formally charge him, and in any event, not longer than 48 hours after his arrest and remand. There are two Criminal Mentions Courts, one to deal with District Arrest Cases (DACs) and the other with Magistrates' Arrest Cases (MACs).

At the Criminal Mentions Court, the charges are read and explained to the accused persons. The presiding judge can sentence accused persons who plead guilty. Where an accused person intends to plead guilty to certain specified categories of offences, the presiding judge will transfer these cases for sentencing either to the Centralised Sentencing Court, the Special Sentencing Court or to the Senior District Judge's Court. The presiding judge can also grant appropriate applications by the prosecution or the accused persons, including bail applications, applications to detain the accused persons for further investigations,

referrals to the Institute of Mental Health and applications to engage defence counsel. Where an accused person claims trial, the presiding judge fixes the case for a pre-trial conference before a Group Manager Judge under the GMC scheme.

The Centralised Sentencing Court

The Centralised Sentencing Court sentences accused persons who plead guilty to certain specified categories of offences.

The Special Sentencing Court

The Special Sentencing Court was established on 12 April 2002 to deal specifically with repeat and persistent offenders. These recalcitrant offenders have serious re-offending records and are persons whom the court considers it necessary to impose a substantial deterrent sentence, or a sentence that is expedient for the protection of the public and the prevention of crime or for the offender's own reformation and rehabilitation. Senior and experienced District Judges preside in this Court on designated days.

The Night Courts

The Night Courts were established in April 1992 to deal with the high volume of regulatory and traffic offences. There are two Night Courts, each with its own profile of cases. Court 26N deals with summonses and notices issued by the various governmental departments such as the Housing and Development Board, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Central Provident Fund Board, the Registry of Companies and Businesses and the Inland Revenue Authority. Court 25N deals with road traffic offences prosecuted by the Traffic Police and regulatory offences prosecuted by the Land Transport Authority.

These courts function for the convenience of the working public who would otherwise have to take time off from work in order to attend court. At the Night

Court, the charge is read and explained to the accused person. The presiding judge can sentence an accused person who pleads guilty. If an accused person claims trial, the presiding judge will transfer the case to the Filter Court.

The Filter Court

The Filter Court generally deals with Night Court cases where the accused person has claimed trial, and other simple criminal cases which require up to a day's trial. It is also a holding court which filters cases to other trial courts.

The Traffic Court

The Traffic Court hears and tries traffic offences. It deals with all fresh traffic arrest cases, Traffic Police and Land Transport Authority summonses and notices where there are no offers of composition. It also operates as a mentions court for traffic cases and deals with a wide variety of applications including applications for bail, remand and adjournments.

The Coroner's Court

The State Coroner presides over the Coroner's Court and deals with cases that are classified by the Police as Coroner's cases. The Coroner will investigate and conduct a Coroner's Inquiry in cases where a person dies in a sudden, violent or unnatural manner, or when the cause of death is unknown, as well as in other situations where the law so requires.

4. SPECIALISED CENTRES

The e@dr Centre

The e@dr Centre is headed by a Director who is an experienced District Judge. It provides court-based alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services for parties who have already filed originating processes in the Subordinate Courts, to explore settlement options with a view to the resolution of their disputes without trial.

These services are provided at no cost to the parties involved and allow them the opportunity to seek an early resolution of conflicts resulting in savings of time and costs. The e@dr Centre handles the mediation of primarily civil matters. It also provides training for staff and volunteer mediators.

The Multi-Door Courthouse (MDC)

The MDC is an innovation of the Subordinate Courts and is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth and Asia-Pacific region. The MDC provides a broad range of services to the public. In particular, it assists parties in pairing disputes within the jurisdiction of the Subordinate Courts with the most appropriate dispute resolution methods. It also provides information on other services of the Subordinate Courts.

5. JUDICIAL DUTIES IN OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS

In addition to their judicial duties at the Subordinate Courts, District Judges also preside in various Administrative Tribunals, such as the Military Court of Appeal, Copyright Tribunal, Industrial Arbitration Court, Liquor Licensing Board, Anti-Dumping Tribunal, Income Tax Board of Review, Tenants' Compensation Board, Hotels Licensing Board, Requisition Resources Board, GST (Goods and Services Tax) Board of Review, Valuation Board of Review, and the Inquiry Committee of the Law Society (for disciplinary proceedings involving advocates and solicitors). Some District Judges of the Muslim faith also preside in the Syariah Court as ad hoc Presidents during night court hearing sessions, on a monthly basis, while others sit as appellate judges for Syariah Court appeals.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Subordinate Courts are committed to the fair, just and swift delivery of justice in Singapore. In order to achieve these objectives, the Subordinate Courts are constantly striving to improve, strengthen and streamline our court processes and court administration. Over the last 13 years, the Subordinate Courts have been transformed by an intensive, extensive and comprehensive programme of reforms and changes to become one of the leading judiciaries in the world. Our motto, Dignus Honore, or Worthy of Honour, is a succinct distillation of our pledge to deliver quality justice.

1. OUR COURT GOVERNANCE

The Senior District Judge heads the administration of justice in the Subordinate Courts. He oversees the formulation and execution of strategic policies and operational workplans and is directly accountable to The Honourable the Chief Justice. To achieve these objectives, the Senior District Judge is assisted by a core team that includes the Principal District Judges, Group Managers, the Registrar, Principal Director (Corporate Services), Senior Directors and Directors.

Other court administrators provide essential para-legal services and corporate support services to enable the effective functioning of the Subordinate Courts. Para-legal services are provided in the various registries dealing with civil, criminal, family, juvenile, small claims and other matters. Corporate support services are provided in matters such as personnel, infrastructure development, public affairs, human resource development, finance, research and statistics, information technology and court services.

2. THE TRILOGY OF COURT GOVERNANCE

In managing change, the Subordinate Courts formulated the Trilogy of Court Governance to strengthen the fundamentals and infrastructure of the administration of justice. The Trilogy of Court Governance comprises the Strategic Framework, the Justice Statement and a set of Core Competencies. They collectively provide the values, ideals and benchmarks which have made the Subordinate Courts world-class.

The Strategic Framework

The Subordinate Courts have a strategic framework setting out eight main elements which provide a reference or benchmark against which the activities of the courts are constantly assessed. These elements are essential to establish a firm foundation for the justice system. They cover the desired public perception of the Singapore justice system, the need to maintain human dignity and the rule of law, enhance access to justice, and areas such as the nature of the judicial process, applicable court governance principles, strategic and effective use of technology, scenario and strategic planning, talent management and continuing education.

The Justice Statement

The Justice Statement encapsulates and defines the mission, objectives and goals of all the judges and staff of the Subordinate Courts. It is our corporate statement that codifies the principles to which we ascribe and subscribe. The Justice Statement sets out the four Justice Models and their underlying philosophies and embodies the oath of office and allegiance which every judge of the Subordinate Courts pledges to live by.

The Core Competencies

The Subordinate Courts has a set of Core Competencies which contain the knowledge capital and catalogue of



SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS

(from left to right)

MS MARILYN LEE
Deputy Case Administrator, Multi-Door Courthouse

MS DALBIR KAUR
Senior Asst Director, Personnel

MR KRISHNA R SHARMA
Asst Director, Crime

MR STEVEN CHIANG
Service Information Manager / Asst Quality Service Manager

MR JOSEPH JOHN
Registrar, Small Claim Tribunals

MR GLENFIELD DE SOUZA
Director, Legal / Deputy Director, Civil

MR LEE CHUN YIP
Senior Director, Corporate Services / Chief Information Officer

MS PAPINDER KAUR
Deputy Director, Development

MS ANNE DURRAY
Senior Director, Legal / Director, Small Claims Tribunals

MS CHAN WAI YIN
Director, Research & Statistics Unit / Deputy Chief Information Officer

a modern and forward-looking judiciary. These Core Competencies expand the traditional role of the judge from a “Judge-Adjudicator” to include a “Judge-Administrator”, “Judge-Reformer”, “Judge-Educator” and “Judge-Mediator”. We entrench these roles and capabilities to ensure that the Judiciary remains relevant and firm in times of uncertainty and change.

3. ORGANISATIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Subordinate Courts have been at the forefront of implementing organisational best practices such as the Justice Scorecard system, the Net Economic Value system and the Six Sigma. These mechanisms allow



INTERPRETERS
SECTION

(from left to right)
MR LASHMAN SINGH
Head Interpreter, Indian
MR TAN SWAN LIANG
Head Interpreter, Chinese
MR ZAKARIA ISMAIL
Head Interpreter, Malay

the Subordinate Courts to constantly review internal work processes and provide an objective standard against which judicial performance can be measured. Such performance review processes in turn foster a dynamic and resilient judiciary.

Justice Scorecard System

The Justice Scorecard system is implemented across all divisions in the Subordinate Courts. The system tracks the performance of the Subordinate Courts under three main perspectives – Community, Organisational and Employee. The Subordinate Courts use the Justice Scorecard both as a performance measurement and performance management tool. It helps translate the Subordinate Courts’ mission and strategies into operational goals, and enables the achievements to be measured against a balanced set of perspectives.

Net Economic Value (NEV) System

The NEV system has been fully implemented in the Subordinate Courts. Under the NEV system, which complements the Justice Scorecard system, the amount of value created by the organisation as a whole or the

different divisions, is measured by assessing the amount of resources expended in producing certain output, such as cases dealt with. The Subordinate Courts constantly increase NEV by increasing operational efficiency and productivity, reducing operational expenses, and improving the management of financial, human and material resources.

Six Sigma

Six Sigma is an organisational philosophy that strives for near perfection, or less than four defects per million opportunities. The Justice Scorecard and Six Sigma are in alignment with the Subordinate Courts’ overall performance architecture framework. The Six Sigma gels in seamlessly with the Subordinate Courts’ drive for near perfection for all the processes measured by the Justice Scorecard. The Subordinate Courts are integrating both systems, so that eventually, all processes will be Six Sigma-driven, and the targets set in the Justice Scorecard will be reviewed accordingly to reflect the expected marked improvements.

THE JUSTICE STATEMENT

ONE MISSION

To Administer Justice

TWO OBJECTIVES

**To Uphold the Rule of Law
To Enhance Access to Justice**

THREE GOALS

**To Decide and Resolve Justly
To Administer Effectively
To Preserve Public Trust and Confidence**

FOUR JUSTICE MODELS

**Criminal Justice – Protecting the Public
Juvenile Justice – Restorative Justice
Civil Justice – Effective and Fair Dispute Resolution
Family Justice – Protecting Family Obligations**

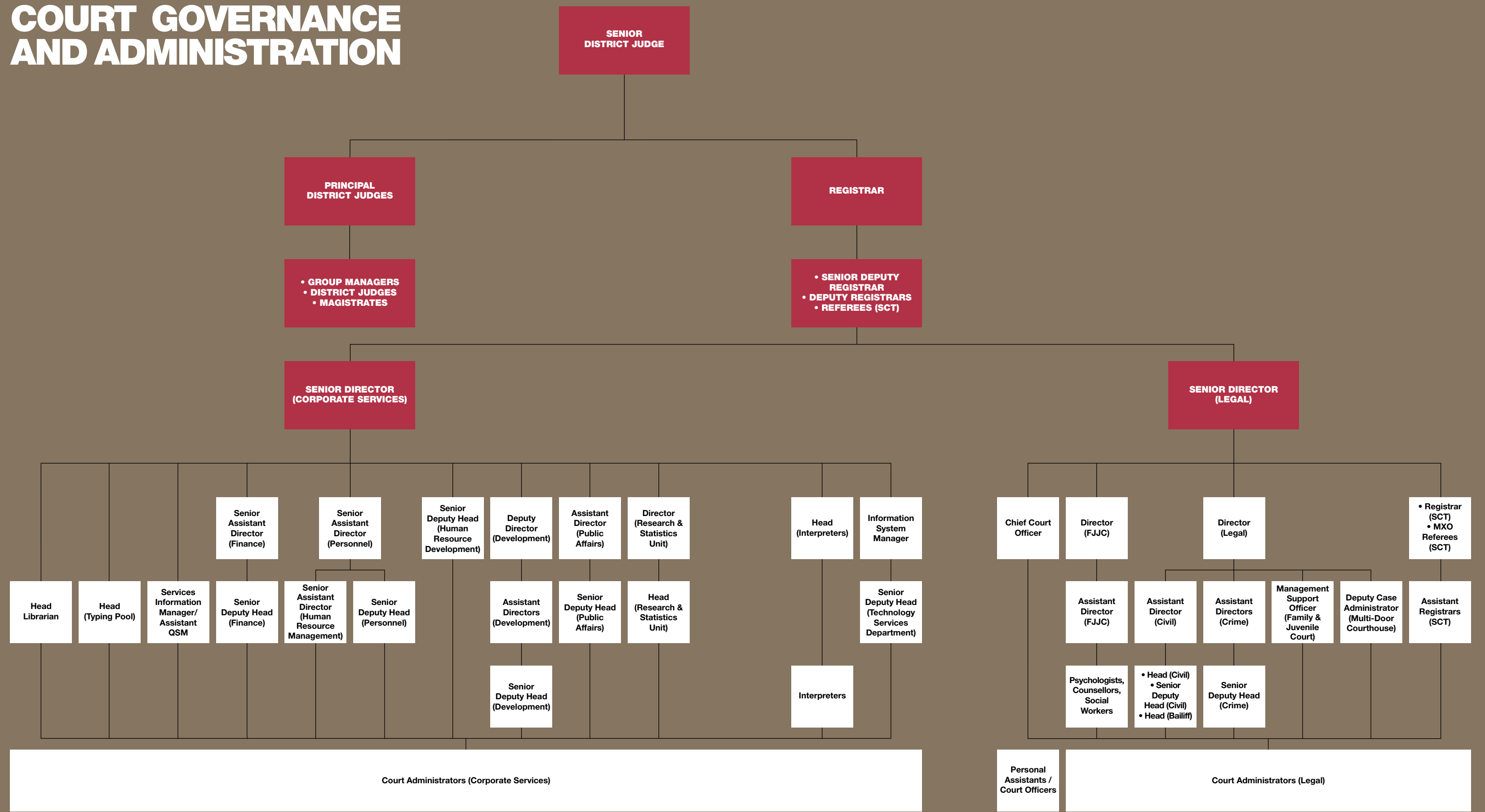
FIVE VALUES

**Accessibility
Expedition and Timeliness
Equality, Fairness and Integrity
Independence and Accountability
Public Trust and Confidence**

SIX PRINCIPLES

**To Faithfully Discharge Judicial Duties
To do Right to All Manner of People
After the Laws and Usages of the Republic of Singapore
Without Fear or Favour, Affection or Ill Will
To the Best of their Ability, and
To be Faithful and Bear True Allegiance to the
Republic of Singapore**

COURT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION



THE JUSTICE DIVISIONS

“In (every case), the fundamental question is whether our judicial system holds the balance fairly between the parties, although the nature of the desired balance is somewhat different.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION – PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

The criminal justice system is founded on three cardinal principles, namely, the supremacy of the rule of law, equality before the law, as well as the protection of the public. The Subordinate Courts deal with more than 99% of all criminal cases in Singapore. The criminal justice system in Singapore must hence be inviolable to instability and corruption, have integrity, be transparent and efficient. A balance must be struck between upholding the constitutional rights of accused persons and protecting the public.

The mandate of the Criminal Justice Division of the Subordinate Courts is to deliver swift, fair and exact justice. The Courts keep pace with changing patterns of crime and criminality by reviewing criminal trends, revising and updating sentencing benchmarks and refining the criminal work processes. Towards this end, the Criminal Justice Division has established a sentencing framework focused on crime reduction as well as punishment for the immediate crime.

1. REFINEMENTS TO CRIMINAL WORK PROCESSES

EFFICIENT CASE MANAGEMENT REGIME Pre-Prosecution Case Management

The feasibility of conducting a pre-prosecution Pre-Trial Conference (PTC) was evaluated internally. Early case discussion, plea negotiation outside the purview of the courts, prospects of earlier case resolution without trial, earlier trial dates if trial is inevitable with reduced time in remand, are some of the numerous benefits which are expected from the implementation of the pre-prosecution PTCs.

Development of a Bail Flight Risk Criteria

The Research & Statistics Unit of the Subordinate

Courts is currently studying the profile of bail absconders from a sample of cases gathered in the year 2002. The findings of this research will help the courts to develop the Bail Flight Risk Criteria to assist judicial analysis of bail cases in courts and reduce the abscondance rate.

JUST AND EFFECTIVE SENTENCING Special Sentencing Tools

The Criminal Courts have continued to improve upon the development of an objective risk of re-offending profiling scale to identify potentially high-risk adult offenders. Work is also being done with the Prisons Department to improve the format of Corrective Training and Preventive Detention Reports, by including new features such as a more detailed recent history of the offender's personal background, a Medical Officer's memorandum on whether the offender is physically and mentally fit to undergo the Corrective Training/Preventive Detention regimes and an assessment of the offender's general risk of recidivism. These improvements will enable the sentencing judge to make a more informed decision on sentencing.

Research of Preliminary Screening Tools

Research is being conducted into preliminary screening tools linking an offender's known case history with a list of standard offences in order to predict his risk of re-offending within two years of sentence, if a non-custodial sentence has been imposed, or within two years of his release, if a custodial sentence has been imposed. This is to enable potential recidivists to be identified and dealt with appropriately.

2. STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Criminal Practice & Policy Group (CPPG)

The CPPG, comprising experienced judges in the Criminal Courts, was formed in January 2003. The



CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION
GROUP MANAGERS

(from left to right)
PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE FRANCIS G REMEDIOS
PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE WONG KEEN ONN
DISTRICT JUDGE SEE KEE OON
DISTRICT JUDGE MAVIS CHIONH
DISTRICT JUDGE TAN PUAY BOON



CRIMINAL TRIAL COURT JUDGES

(from left to right)
DISTRICT JUDGE KOW KENG SIONG
DISTRICT JUDGE DORIS LAI
DISTRICT JUDGE RAHIM JALIL
DISTRICT JUDGE SALINA ISHAK
DISTRICT JUDGE ROY NEIGHBOUR
DISTRICT JUDGE MALCOLM TAN
State Coroner
DISTRICT JUDGE ONG CHIN RHU
DISTRICT JUDGE VALERIE THEAN
DISTRICT JUDGE AUDREY LIM

CPPG acts as an advisory and steering panel to the various Subordinate Courts committees dealing with criminal matters and assists the Senior District Judge on the formulation of internal policies and administrative practices in relation to criminal matters. The CPPG also monitors and reports on law reform efforts and significant legal developments in target jurisdictions to the Senior District Judge and the Justice Policy Group.

In accordance with its terms of reference, the CPPG has issued various practice circulars. These practice circulars focus on areas in criminal procedure, sentencing, novel and emerging areas of criminal law, and prescribe standardised internal policies and administrative practices in relation to criminal matters. The CPPG is an important initiative in the institutionalisation of judicial knowledge and trial processes.

3. HARNESSING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Tickets and Summons System (TICKS 2000)

TICKS 2000 is a case management system which serves the Subordinate Courts and all agencies involved in the prosecution of statutory or regulatory offences. Launched on 29 June 1999, TICKS 2000 is now in its fourth year of operation. Through on-line information provided by the prosecuting agencies, TICKS 2000 generates court documents, and tracks and monitors cases from initiation until final disposal. The system handles about 1000 cases per day, reducing the time that has to be spent on tracking cases.

Singapore Case Recording and Information Management System (SCRIMS)

SCRIMS, an integrated computer system for the management of criminal cases, was implemented on 24 August 1999, and has successfully rolled into its third year. The system tracks every District Court and

Magistrates' Court criminal case through all stages of the court process, from initiation until final disposal. SCRIMS was extended in 2003 to cover Town Council cases. With SCRIMS, comprehensive information on criminal cases in the Subordinate Courts is readily available on screen. Documents and letters necessary for the processing of criminal cases are also automatically generated by the system.

Automated Traffic Offence Management System (ATOMS)

Through ATOMS, traffic offenders can pay their fines and plead guilty to regulatory offences at kiosks. AXS which took over the management of the kiosks with effect from end 2001, with its web-enabled version, provides the kiosks service from 7.00 am to 12.00 midnight daily, seven days a week. ATOMS is linked to a case management system database which stores and updates offender information. Today, approximately 25% of all traffic offences are disposed of through ATOMS.

Currently there are 190 AXS kiosks island-wide. In order to enhance public access to justice, these AXS kiosks are placed at high traffic areas such as shopping malls, offices in the Central Business District, bus-stops, MRT stations, neighbourhood town centres, government establishments, the Changi International Airport, petrol stations, and tertiary institutions. The number of AXS kiosks carrying ATOMS is expected to increase shortly to 240. Several improvements have been made to the AXS kiosks to facilitate the composition of traffic offences. Not only will these kiosks offer additional payment modes, such as payment through cash cards, they will also allow the composition of multiple offences committed by one offender. In 2003, ATOMS was extended to allow repeat offenders to plead guilty to traffic offences at its kiosks. This will increase the pool of people who are able to use ATOMS and dispense with their attendance in court.



CRIMINAL MENTIONS AND FILTER
COURT JUDGES

(from left to right)
DISTRICT JUDGE SHAIFFUDIN SARUWAN
DISTRICT JUDGE ERIC TIN
DISTRICT JUDGE CHAY YUEN FATT



CRIME REGISTRY DEPUTY REGISTRARS

(from left to right)
 DISTRICT JUDGE REGINA OW
 MAGISTRATE ADRIEL LOH
 MAGISTRATE WONG LI TEIN
 DISTRICT JUDGE WONG PECK
 DISTRICT JUDGE WONG CHOON NING



CRIMINAL JUSTICE
 DIVISION SENIOR
 OFFICERS

(from left to right)
 MS NABI HA MALIM
 Asst Director
 MR KRISHNA R SHARMA
 Asst Director
 MS MARILYN SOH
 Senior Deputy Head

Broadband Video-Conferencing for Criminal Pre-Trial Conferences (PTCs)

The broadband video-conferencing for criminal PTCs was piloted in 2002 for evening and mass PTCs, and is now in its second year of operation. The facility enables officers from the Attorney-General’s Chambers to appear before the court by way of video-conferencing, thereby obviating the need to travel to the courts.

The Subordinate Courts are exploring the feasibility of linking up electronically with the Immigration and Checkpoint Authorities’ (ICA) OSCARS system for a more efficient management of bail matters and the enforcement of warrant of arrest cases. The electronic link-up will enable the Subordinate Courts to obtain an accused person’s most recent address and tap on ICA’s stop-list which is used to track the movement of persons in and out of various check points around the country.

Video-link for Bail Processing

The Crime Registry has completed the setting up of video-link facilities between Chambers R and the lock-up, in order that accused persons need not be brought

from the lock-up for the purpose of processing bail before the Chamber Magistrate. The video-link facility has considerably enhanced the efficient administration of the Bail Centre, reduced congestion and improved security at the Crime Registry.

4. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Sentencing Tariffs and Research Tool (START)

The Subordinate Courts continue to conduct extensive reviews and updating of our Sentencing Guidelines, to ensure that sentences are up-to-date, consistent and current with crime trends. This year, START has replaced the existing Sentencing Information and Guideline System (SINGS). Selected summaries of Magistrate’s Appeals is a new feature found in START.

Adjusting Sentencing Benchmarks To Meet Crime Prevalence

Judges in the Criminal Courts are regularly appraised of prevailing crime trends in order to enable them to adopt a robust approach to sentencing as befitting



CRIME REGISTRY OFFICERS

(from left to right)
 MS NOOR AFIDA ADAM
 Registry Officer
 MS KAMISSAH MAHMUD
 Core Night Court Officer, Court 25N
 MRS MOK-GOH KIT SOON
 Deputy Head
 MR PANDIYAN VELLASAMI
 Bail Administrator

the facts and circumstances of each case. Relevant data and input are collated, analysed and disseminated on a regular basis, and meetings are periodically held to review crime trends and identify emerging issues.

Group Managers of the various Criminal Court clusters continue to meet their respective judges in regular informal sharing sessions to discuss recent decisions and sentencing developments. Judges also update each other on new developments in the law, discuss Magistrates' Appeals and exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences with one another.

THE CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION: EXPEDITIOUS, FAIR AND ECONOMICAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The civil justice system seeks to achieve a fair, expeditious and economical means of dispute resolution of civil and commercial disputes. An effective civil justice system is instrumental in inspiring investor confidence, and facilitating Singapore's global competitiveness.

The Subordinate Courts have departed from the traditional mode of dispute resolution by means of court adjudication as a first recourse, and have successfully integrated alternative modes of dispute resolution into the court processes. Seamless linkages between the various divisions of the civil justice system also result in smooth and timely flow of cases, resulting in lower costs for litigants.

The Civil Justice Division comprises the Civil Registry, the eCourts, the Commercial Civil Courts, the e@dr Centre and the Small Claims Tribunals.

THE CIVIL REGISTRY AND THE CIVIL TRIAL COURTS

1. REFINEMENTS TO CIVIL WORK PROCESSES

Dispute Avoidance

In November 2003, the Subordinate Courts and South West Community Development Council (CDC) launched Credit Education Singapore, to deliver



CIVIL TRIAL COURT JUDGES

(from left to right)
 DISTRICT JUDGE TAN BOON HENG
 DISTRICT JUDGE IRENE WU
 PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE FOO TUAT YIEN
 DISTRICT JUDGE ZAINOL ABEEDIN
 DISTRICT JUDGE KATHRYN LOW



CIVIL REGISTRY DEPUTY REGISTRARS

(from left to right)
 DISTRICT JUDGE CORNIE NG
 MAGISTRATE ABIGAIL NG
 DISTRICT JUDGE JAMES LEONG
 DISTRICT JUDGE JULIAN CHIN
 DISTRICT JUDGE RONALD GWEE
 DISTRICT JUDGE TAN MAY TEE



CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION
 SENIOR OFFICERS

(from left to right)
 MS IRENE LEE
 Senior Deputy Head, Probate
 MR GLENFIELD DE SOUZA
 Deputy Director, Civil
 MR PRAGATHESVARAN
 LETCHMANAN
 Head
 MS TAN SIM JOO
 Senior Deputy Head

non-profit consumer credit education to the public. Through Credit Counselling Singapore (CCS), a complementary initiative of the Subordinate Courts and South West CDC, together with Singapore Pools, credit counselling has also benefited a pool of pilot cases. The counselling programme is a form of specialised help for debtors encountering financial distress through over-indebtedness. Debtors will receive assistance from professional counsellors in re-organising their spending habits to enable them to repay their debts. At the same time, creditors are encouraged to refrain voluntarily from legal action against the debtors. In this way, the CCS hopes to achieve an effective method of debt recovery for creditors without the need for litigation, thus saving time and costs. As for debtors, this service enables them to avoid the vicious cycle of escalating costs and interest payments on their debts. Overall, this will also decrease the number of routine civil debt collection claims, judgments and executions, enabling court resources to be used in a more productive manner.

Post Judgment Debt Recovery Mediation

The Civil Registry is also working towards the

introduction of a mediation process for post-judgment debt recovery. This early intervention is expected to promote an amicable and effective final resolution of court disputes in the field of debt recovery. A pilot programme was launched in the Small Claims Tribunals this year and the initiative will be introduced across the Civil Justice Division in the near future.

2. STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Special Management of Non-Injury Motor Accident Cases (NIMA)

To better control time-lines, hearing dates and the number of NIMA cases proceeding for trial, the Civil Trial Courts implemented a filter court system this year. The filter court system will enable more cases to be accommodated within a hearing schedule, with a margin of allowance for over-fixing to take into account the cases that settle before trial so as to avoid wasting trial dates.

A Working Group is also currently considering how the settlement rate for NIMA cases may be further improved.



CIVIL REGISTRY OFFICERS

(from left to right)
 MS NORNAHAR ABDUL RAHMAN
 Deputy Head, Summons & Judgement
 MRS ANNE MATHEW
 Deputy Head, Civil Appeal & Damages
 MS CHIN SEOW WEI
 Registry Officer
 MS ISMAWATI ISMAIL
 Asst Head, Summons & Judgement

Managing the Assessment of Damages (AD) for Non-Personal Injury Cases

This is a further initiative employed to deal with the effective management of the assessment of damages for non-personal injury cases. With the introduction of pre-AD conferences, issues in contention are crystallised in advance. This allows for a better estimate of the time required for an assessment of damages hearing. The greater transparency and understanding of the issues achieved will increase the chances of settling contentious matters.

Review of Costs

The Civil Registry completed a comprehensive study on costs incurred in civil matters. The study included an examination of recent amendments to the Rules of Court on costs. A revised set of guidelines on costs for civil matters was thereafter issued to guide judges in the award of costs in civil matters.

Expert Evidence

To further assist parties to save time and costs, the Civil Registry explored the introduction of an expert

evidence protocol. Feedback was obtained from the various stakeholders in the industry such as the Law Society of Singapore, as well as from other professional bodies representing experts such as doctors, architects and surveyors, to aid in drafting the protocol.

3. HARNESSING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Upgrading of the Electronic Queue Management System (EQMS)

The EQMS has become an integral part of all civil interlocutory applications in the Subordinate Courts. It was successfully upgraded to allow for an integration of the queuing mechanism with the JusticeOnLine (JOL) system. An important feature of the new system is the Short Messaging Service (SMS) capabilities. This allows lawyers to be alerted by SMS when their case is about to be called for hearing. In addition, more detailed information on pending cases, such as the names of the parties and their time of registration in the electronic queue is now available to the Deputy Registrars.



e@dr SETTLEMENT JUDGES

(from left to right)
 DISTRICT JUDGE ADRIAN SOON
 DISTRICT JUDGE NG PENG HONG
 Director, e@dr Centre
 DISTRICT JUDGE SENG KWANG BOON

4. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONGST JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Knowledge Sharing

Monthly meetings for judges from both the Civil Trial Courts and the Civil Registry, to discuss novel or interesting points encountered in cases heard, have been introduced. This facilitates the exchange of opinions and ideas on civil procedure and other legal issues.

Registry Knowledge Management Database

The Registry Knowledge Management Database, which encompasses the Assessment of Damages and Taxation databases, is constantly updated and maintained. Deputy Registrars and Civil Trial Judges have easy access to this Database which also hosts discussion threads, and which keeps an up-to-date record of all papers delivered at internal meetings or international conferences.

THE e@dr CENTRE

The e@dr Centre provides parties with court-based alternative dispute resolution services called Court Dispute Resolution (CDR). CDR sessions are provided

free of charge, and are presided by Settlement Judges, who are experienced District Judges with special training and aptitude. The early resolution of conflicts results in the saving of time and costs. The e@dr Centre is an essential instrument in the Subordinate Courts' drive to improve access to justice and reduce the costs of litigation to both the litigant and the State.

1. REFINEMENTS TO CDR WORK PROCESSES

Court Dispute Resolution International (CDRI)

The CDRI scheme provides co-mediation in civil cases by Subordinate Courts judges together with foreign judges from other common law or civil law jurisdictions using real-time video-conferencing technology. Cases slated for CDRI are usually of high value and involve international litigants. CDRI is especially suited for dealing with factual disputes by neutral evaluation. Where questions of law are involved, the Singapore judge will determine the legal position. Co-mediation has the advantage of providing a forum for additional judicial perspectives and views from other jurisdictions.



e@dr CENTRE

(from left to right)
MS LEE WEE KA
Registry Officer
MS NAPISAH BAEVI D/O
ABDUL GANI
Registry Officer
MS NORJAHAN AMOO
Registry Officer
MS KRYSTAL TAN
Registry Officer
MR MOHAMED RAMI ABDULLAH
Registry Officer

Differentiated Case Management

The e@dr Centre has continued to refine its operational process and in 2003, implemented a differentiated case management system for medical negligence and construction cases.

A dedicated settlement judge will track and monitor all such cases that come into the system. For medical negligence cases, settlement judges can obtain additional perspectives and views from medical experts through the medical panel of experts provided by the Ministry of Health at no extra cost to the parties. With regard to construction claims, the e@dr Centre has developed a seamless process for construction cases to be speedily channelled for mediation or CDR. Panels of experts from the Singapore Institute of Architects, the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers, or the Society of Construction Law can also be called to assist in the settlement of construction and renovation claims.

Introduction of CDR Form for Non-Injury Motor Accident (NIMA) cases

A CDR Form was introduced in January 2003 for NIMA cases. Feedback from lawyers show that the Forms have helped to halve the time taken for NIMA CDRs. The settlement judge can also quickly understand the accident scenario by looking at the sketches and the information provided in the Form. In having to complete the Forms, lawyers are better able to concentrate their minds on giving constructive input for settlement proposals.

2. HARNESSING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

JusticeOnLine (JOL)

The e@dr Centre implemented its virtual court dispute resolution system, JusticeOnLine, on 23 September 2002. In the course of 2003, more than a thousand CDR

sessions have been convened via JOL, where one or more of the parties do not have to personally attend the court session but can participate in the CDR from a different location. The scheme has been so successful at the e@dr Centre that a second JOL-enabled chambers was set up during the year.

MULTI-DOOR COURTHOUSE (MDC)

The MDC is a one-stop information centre for court users and helps to educate and channel members of public to appropriate dispute-resolution avenues or alternatively, to consider dispute-prevention measures. This year, the MDC continued to initiate numerous projects and programmes to create greater awareness of the law and enhance public access to the justice system.

Project Concern

For 2003, Project Concern refined its focus upon the elderly and blue-collar workers in our society, whose lack of skills, literacy, knowledge or mobility may impede their access to justice. As part of its work in creating greater understanding of the law for these often neglected segments of society, the MDC sits on the Public Education Committee in the Golden Life Workgroup of the Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) Counselling Centre. During the course of the year, the Committee looked into promoting awareness of abuse suffered by elderly victims perpetrated by members in the community. It also explored the ambit of assistance rendered to these victims and published a training manual to highlight forms of abuse.

e-Citizen Portal

The MDC was invited to participate and contribute to the national e-Citizen Portal. This Portal provides members of public with a convenient means of locating pertinent legal information of interest by hyperlinking information to the websites of each relevant organisation.



MULTIDOOR COURTHOUSE

(from left to right)
MS MARILYN LEE
Deputy Case Administrator
MR STEVEN CHIANG
Service Information Manager /
Asst Quality Service Manager

Vulnerable Witness Support Programme

The MDC launched the Vulnerable Witness Support Programme in 1998. Since then, the programme has established itself to be vital in providing non-evidentiary, practical and emotional support to vulnerable witnesses, and to their families and caregivers in appropriate cases. Under this programme, vulnerable witnesses are defined as victims or witnesses of crime under the age of 16 years or those having an intellectual capacity below the age of 16 years. Referrals from the Singapore Police Force are made to the Singapore Children's Society for State-prosecuted criminal cases. Volunteer Support Persons (VSPs) are assigned by the Singapore Children's Society to assist vulnerable witnesses. The VSP will provide emotional support and assistance to the vulnerable witness by sitting in court with the vulnerable witness while he or she testifies. Prior to the trial, the MDC conducts a visit to the court to familiarise the vulnerable witness with the physical structure and layout of the court, and the video-link facilities. Procedural matters relating to the conduct of a trial will also be explained.

THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS (SCT)

Since 1985, the SCT have provided the community with an inexpensive, efficient and effective forum for the resolution of disputes arising from small claims. Numerous SCT initiatives such as the filing of claims by facsimile and other electronic means including the Electronic Filing System, admission to claims over a telephone admission system, launching of an SCT website at www.smallclaims.gov.sg and the lodgement of claims through a 'drop in box', have allowed claims to be filed more cheaply, quickly and conveniently.

1. REFINEMENTS TO SMALL CLAIMS WORK PROCESSES

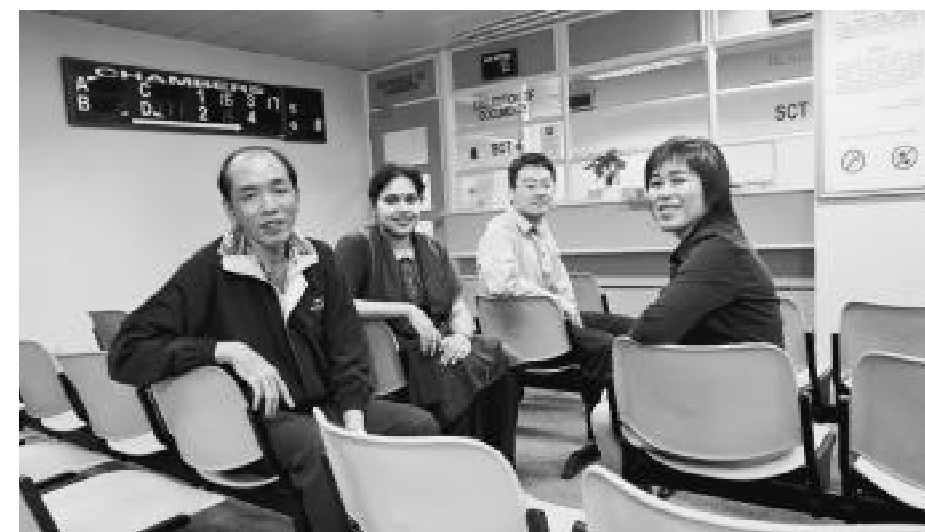
Debt Recovery Plans@SCT

The SCT are constantly refining their work processes to achieve operational efficiency. In 2003, the SCT extended their resources to the post adjudication stage by providing parties with an alternative mode of enforcement via the Debt Recovery Plans@SCT (DRP) after an order of the SCT has been entered. Under the



SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS

(from left to right)
MR JOSEPH JOHN
Registrar
MS CATHERINE YONG
Asst Registrar
MS ANNE DURRAY
Director
MS VIVIENNE ONG
Referee
MR THAM YEONG SHIN
Referee



SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS REGISTRY

(from left to right)
MR LIM GEOK KWEE
Operations Support Officer
MS VENILLAH D/O SAMYNATHAN
Typist
MR TOH CHEE TIONG
Registry Officer
MS CARMEN SEAH
Deputy Head



BAILIFFS SECTION

(from left to right)
MR ISMAIL B MAT
Bailliff
MR MOHD HATTA A RAZAK
Bailliff
MR ABDUL GHANI MAJID
Head
MR L. RUTHRESHWARAN
Bailliff
MR JOHARI SATIMAN
Bailliff

DRP, parties attend a counselling session to explore ways of recovering post-adjudication debts and upon a mutually acceptable resolution, execute a debt recovery plan before a counsellor. The DRP provides for the claimant a free and effective means of debt recovery and for the respondent, a manageable and far less embarrassing means of clearing his debts.

Procedural Reforms to the SCT Act

There is an on-going exercise to review the SCT Act and its accompanying Rules to fortify and reflect the changes and adjustments necessary to meet with the changing requirements of the public.

2. STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Digest of SCT Decisions

As part of the Subordinate Courts' efforts to institutionalise judicial knowledge, an exercise to digest the grounds of decision of all SCT appeal cases for reference was done. The SCT are also studying the feasibility of setting up an electronic database for easy access to digests of decided cases and SCT appeals to the High Court.

3. HARNESSING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Internet-based Electronic Filing System (EFS) in SCT

Electronic Filing was introduced at the SCT in 1997. This facility was then limited to bulk claimants. In 2003, an internet-based SCT-EFS system was introduced to the general public enabling more claims to be filed, uploaded and updated electronically. Claimants can now enjoy the convenience of filing their claims from their homes, offices or any place in the world where there is internet access.

Video Conferencing at the SCT (VC@SCT)

VC@SCT will be launched in 2004 for virtual consultations to take place between the SCT headquarters at Apollo Centre and the Town Councils. This will obviate the need for claimants to travel to the SCT headquarters and enable them to appear 'virtually' from the comfort of their offices.

FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVISION: PROTECTION OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

THE FAMILY AND JUVENILE COURT

The philosophy of the Family Court is to protect family obligations so that family ties may be strengthened and preserved. The Juvenile Court believes in restorative justice which recognises the potential for change and reform in young offenders, and seeks to re-integrate the offending juvenile back into their families and the community.

Since September 2001, the Family Court and the Juvenile Court have been brought together under the same roof at No. 3 Havelock Square. This has facilitated the fulfilment of the Subordinate Courts' plan to have a unified family and juvenile justice system.

The Family and Juvenile Justice Division of the Subordinate Courts practices the unified case management system which applies the 'one judicial team/one family approach'. This means that each family will be dealt with by a single judicial team throughout their period within the court process. The 'one judicial team' comprises a Deputy Registrar, supported by court social workers, psychologists and counsellors. This ensures consistency and continuity in procedures and treatment for the families involved in multiple proceedings in the Subordinate Courts.

1. REFINEMENTS TO FAMILY COURT WORK PROCESSES

Reform of the Women's Charter Matrimonial Proceedings Rules (MPR)

The first phase of the project to reform the Women's Charter (Matrimonial Proceedings) Rules was completed in 2003. The new Women's Charter (Matrimonial Proceedings) Rules 2003 were launched on 14 April 2003, in conjunction with Practice Direction No. 2 of 2003. Training sessions on the new Rules and Practice Direction were conducted for members of the Law Society and judges of the Subordinate Courts in early April 2003. In addition, two clinics conducted by Deputy Registrars were held on 30 April 2003 and 7 May 2003 respectively, to answer queries from lawyers on the new Rules and Practice Direction. Three articles and a set of Frequently-Asked-Questions were written and placed on the Family Court website.

The new Rules have focused on updating the rules, streamlining procedures and the creation of user-friendly standard forms. A project is now underway to make proposals for reforms to more substantive areas in the Rules, in consultation with representatives from the Law Society, the Singapore Association of Women Lawyers and the Legal Aid Bureau.

Further Procedural Developments to Family Court Practices

On 15 December 2003, the Supreme Court of Judicature (Transfer of Matrimonial, Divorce and Guardianship of Infants Proceedings to District Court) Order 2003 came into operation. Under this Order, in matrimonial proceedings under Part X of the Women's Charter (Cap 353), where there is a contested application for the division of assets asserted to be worth \$1.5 million or more, the proceedings shall be transferred to the High Court for hearing, upon the Registrar's direction that the ancillary issues are ready for hearing.

Also on 15 December 2003, the Electronic Filing System (EFS) for family proceedings, namely, proceedings by way of a petition filed under Part X of the Women's Charter and originating summonses filed under the Guardianship of Infants Act (Cap 122), s59 of the Women's Charter, the Administration of Muslim Law Act (Cap 3) and s17A of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act (Cap 322) was successfully launched.

The new Practice Direction No. 5 of 2003, which applies to all family proceedings filed on or after 15 December 2003, was also issued setting out the procedures to be complied with in respect of the transfer of matrimonial proceedings to the High Court and the electronic filing of family proceedings.

The Women's Charter (Matrimonial Proceedings-Fees) (Amendment) Rules and the Rules of Court (Amendment No. 4 of 2003) also came into effect on 15 December 2003. These reduced the stamp fees for documents filed under Part X of the MPR as well as the manual handling fee through the service bureau and processing fees for documents filed under the EFS.

Briefings were held for the Law Society on 3 and 4 December 2003 respectively, to educate the family bar on the above developments. Publicity materials in the form of articles and pamphlets on these developments have also been published on the family court website.

2. STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

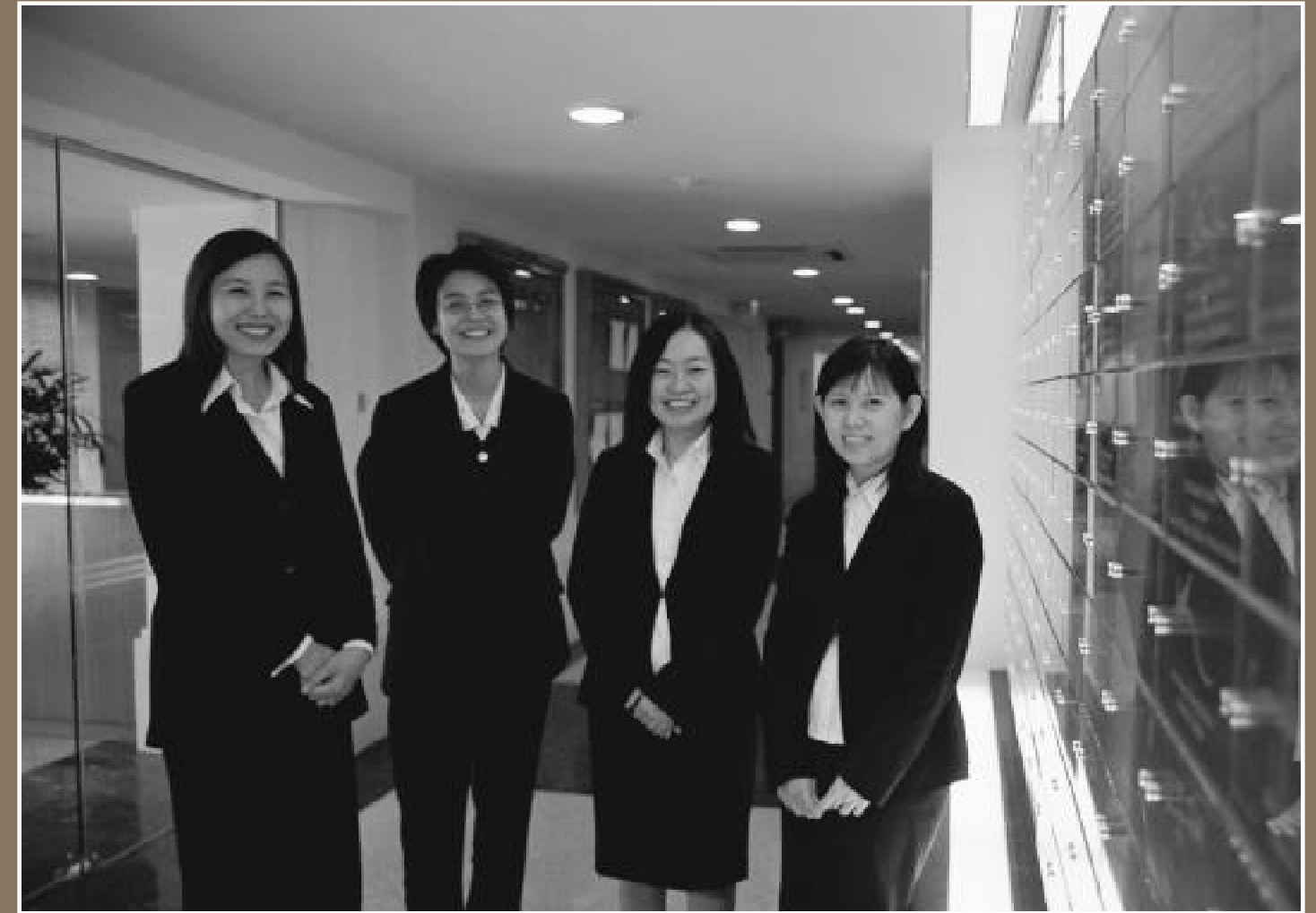
Research Study on Divorcing Couples

A study was conducted to ascertain the reasons for divorce among Singaporean couples. The findings will assist in identifying at-risk couples and the interventions needed to avert marriages from ending in divorce. This study was based on a questionnaire completed by



FAMILY AND JUVENILE COURT JUDGES

(from left to right)
DISTRICT JUDGE TAN PECK CHENG
DISTRICT JUDGE LAURA LAU
PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE KOH JUAT JONG
DISTRICT JUDGE JOCELYN ONG
MAGISTRATE MAY MESENAS



FAMILY COURT DEPUTY REGISTRARS

(from left to right)
DISTRICT JUDGE SHARON LIM
DISTRICT JUDGE LIM HUI MIN
DISTRICT JUDGE DAPHNE HONG
DISTRICT JUDGE HOO SHEAU PENG

divorce litigants between 2001 and 2003. The study covered the demographic profile of these couples, most common reasons for marital conflict and their current feelings towards the state of their marriage.

Juvenile Offender Behaviour (JOB) Criteria Revision

The JOB Criteria is a psychological tool which has been used since 2001 to profile all Juvenile Arrest Cases so as to provide an objective assessment of the juvenile's risk of re-offending. In 2002, data was collected from 100 selected cases to conduct a study to analyse the predictive validity of the JOB Criteria. Once the preliminary findings are completed, refinements will be made to the JOB Criteria based on the results of the study.

3. HARNESSING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Filing System (EFS) for Matrimonial Matters

The EFS for matrimonial matters was developed and successfully launched in 2003. Based on an innovative and unique template approach to facilitate easy document creation, the EFS for matrimonial matters was developed in close consultation with the Law Society and technology vendors. The legislative framework for the system was also extensively reviewed and unlike earlier phases of the EFS, the EFS for matrimonial matters was established on a new, technological paradigm rather than the previous paper-based one.

Family Application Management System (FAMS)

FAMS is an electronic database which captures and stores comprehensive information concerning the parties, their children, the parties' case history, and any orders which have been made by the court for family

violence and maintenance cases. The system can auto-generate applications and orders of court using the information stored in the database, as well as generate statistics. FAMS was successfully launched in early 2003. Meetings are also held regularly to trouble-shoot problems and refine the system.

Juvenile Court Database

The Juvenile Court explored the possibility of setting up a database capturing all Juvenile Court cases (including Juvenile Arrest Cases, Beyond Parental Control Cases and Care and Protection Order Cases), which can be interfaced with the Expanded Singapore Case Recording and Information Management System (SCRIMS 2) and FAMS. The objective is to allow the user to electronically obtain information on a family, the members of which may have multiple proceedings in the Criminal Courts, the Family Court and the Juvenile Court. The Juvenile Court is currently working closely with the Information Technology Department to see how this would be feasible to improve the workflow processes.

At the same time, the Juvenile Court is also exploring the feasibility of interfacing its database with external agencies such as the Ministry of Community Development and Sports, to enable mutual sharing of information via electronic means. A study will be conducted on similar systems from other jurisdictions including the United States to ascertain if they can be modelled or modified to suit our needs.

4. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG JUDICIAL OFFICERS

The Family Court judges hold regular lunch meetings and internal seminars on issues concerning Family Court practices and policies, as well as on interesting or novel family law issues.



FAMILY COURT REGISTRY OFFICERS

(from left to right)
MS MAHANI ADAM
Management Support Officer
MS NORITA NASIBBUDDIN
Registry Officer
MS PATRICIA PNG
Deputy Head
MR JUMAHAT AHMAD
Operations Support Officer

The Family Court Database

This database is regularly updated and contains case digests and grounds of decision of Family Court cases, guidance on Family Court practices, articles and write-ups on family law issues. It is an important point of reference for judicial officers.

THE FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE (FJJC)

The FJJC was formed in March 2002. It is an amalgamation of the Family Conciliation and Resolution Centre (FAMCARE) and Psychological Services Unit. The FJJC upholds the philosophy of preventive and restorative justice. Through all its programmes, it endeavours to bring about reintegration, reconciliation and restitution amongst those who look to the Subordinate Courts for the fair administration of justice. The multi-disciplinary team comprising social workers, counsellors, psychologists and interpreter-mediators, works closely with the judges and the community to fulfil these objectives through continuous evaluation of its core programmes and new programme

initiatives. The FJJC hence complements and supports the Family and Juvenile Court processes.

FJJC INITIATIVES IN YEAR 2003

In 2003, the FJJC continued building upon the strengths of existing programmes such as Project SAVE (substance abuse violence elimination), Project CONTACT (supervised access and supervised transfer programme between the non-custodial parent and child after the custody and access orders are made) and Project IMPACT (parenting workshops highlighting the impact of a divorce on children). It also launched a series of new programmes and initiatives to refine the justice process and enhance its services to the community.

Family Justice Team (FJT)

The FJT sessions started as a pilot programme in July 2002 to help families which are affected by multiple family and juvenile issues in a holistic manner. The FJT has since evolved into a core programme of the FJJC. Weekly FJT sessions are conducted, and review meetings are held between the judges from the Family Court and the Juvenile Court and the FJT facilitators



FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE

(from left to right)

MR RONALD LIM
Senior Counsellor

MS PATRICIA CHUA
Social Worker

MS SARINAH BTE MOHAMED
Senior Social Worker

MS GOH SOO CHENG
Social Worker

MS ANNIE LEE
Director

MR JIM LIM
Social Worker

MS HAN LI JUNE
Assistant Director

MS HARSIMAR KAUR
Counsellor

MS NUR IZZAH AMIR
Counsellor

MS ELAINE TEONG
Psychologist

MR MASILAMANY GNANRAJ
Mediation Co-ordinator

MS BHAJANJIT KAUR
Case Manager

from the FJJC. The cases have covered a range of issues including maintenance, custody, divorce, juvenile and family violence issues.

Project SHINE (Supporting, Helping, Integrating, Nurturing & and Enabling)

Project Shine was introduced to link parties involved in numerous repeat maintenance enforcement proceedings cases with religious and community organisations which may be able to offer them practical, financial, social and emotional support and assistance.

For the pilot phase of the programme, target families were matched with appropriate community organisations such as As-Salam Young Women Muslim Association Family Support Centre, Lutheran Community Care Services, Mendaki, Northeast CDC and SINDA. Other community organisations which have since joined the programme in 2003 were the Asian Women's Welfare Association, Buddhist Lodge, Catholic Welfare Services, Cornerstone Community Care Services, Fei Yue Family Service Centre, MUIS, Sikh Welfare Services and Southwest CDC. These referral agencies provided assistance in the form of short-term financial help, job matching, starting of small businesses, support groups, counselling, and children's educational and developmental programmes.

Youth Family Care (YFC) Programme

In June 2003, the FJJC together with the Youth Development, Singapore Children's Society and the National Volunteer Centre (NVC) formed the YFC Programme. The YFC Programme is a mentorship scheme which matches family volunteers with youths under Juvenile Court orders. The programme has been highly successful in the rehabilitation of youths. The setting up of YFC programme also coincided with the NVC's thrust to promote the concept of Families as Volunteers (FaV). As a result, the FJJC was invited to take part in the production of a

promotional video which featured the YFC programme as an innovative programme embracing the FaV concept. The video was screened at the recent Singapore Information Technology Federation FaV Day on 13 September 2003.

"Stop Shop Theft" Programme

The "Stop Shop Theft" Programme is a nation wide campaign which was launched by the Subordinate Courts, Singapore Police Force, National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and the Dairy Farm Group to curb property crime. As one of the strategic partners supporting the programme, the FJJC gave a talk during the seminar together with other community partners and educators from schools. In August 2003, the Singapore Police Force and the NCPC conducted road shows cum exhibitions on shop theft at various shopping centres to raise awareness of the issue. Dairy Farm Singapore also conducted a contest for the public and staff to contribute novel ideas on dealing with shop theft. Information posters and panels were displayed at stores under the Dairy Farm Group island-wide. These included Seven-Eleven, Giant, Cold Storage and Photo-Finish stores.

Family and Juvenile Court Activity Booklet

There is an activity booklet for children aged between five and 12 years. The first batch of 1000 copies will be distributed to children who accompany their parents to the Family and Juvenile Court in early 2004. Besides keeping these children constructively occupied, this book contains information to help children understand issues such as family violence and separation of parents. The information is presented in an accessible and comprehensive manner, in the form of cartoons and activities.

THE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

“The courts have to provide quality public service in the administration of justice with limited resources. You will find an increasingly vocal and sophisticated public who expect higher standards in the delivery of justice.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

In a community-oriented and quality-focused organisation, the Corporate Services Division provides support in matters such as personnel, human resource development, infrastructure development and building maintenance, public affairs, finance, research and statistics, and information technology. The Corporate Services Division has introduced various programmes and undertaken various projects, in order to meet the expectations of the public for quality service. In addition to the programmes and projects listed below, the Corporate Services Division is actively involved in many other programmes and projects undertaken by the Criminal, Civil, Family and Juvenile Justice Divisions.

1. INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

People Developer Standard (PDS)

The Subordinate Courts were awarded the PDS in 1999 and re-certified in 2002. The PDS is a quality standard that gives recognition to organisations which invest in their people and have a comprehensive system for people development. The Subordinate Courts’ overall employee education, training and development process was evaluated and improved in accordance with the PDS re-certification cycle.

Charting Career Paths

A more structured career path for senior court administrators through career roadmaps, skills training and job exposure will be implemented. Succession planning for managerial and other positions for all management executive officers is also in the pipeline. The introduction of an Open Resource Posting System (ORPS) for officers in the Management Executive Scheme (MXS) provides them with exposure to different portfolios, and will enhance and enrich their experience. The expansion of job duties and secondary

appointments for these officers is also designed to provide them with opportunities to improve and progress in the organisation.

Mentor Scheme for Court Administrators

A mentor scheme for court administrators has been developed to assist new court officers to familiarise themselves with the organisation and culture of the Subordinate Courts, and provide guidance to the new officers.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

As part of the Subordinate Courts’ continual efforts to improve our services and accessibility, a number of important infrastructure improvements were implemented.

Security Enhancements

In order to provide a safe and secure court environment, tighter and more vigilant security screening and checks were introduced at the Subordinate Courts. All court users and members of public are required to go through the screening before entering the court premises.

Improvement of Facilities

One of the Criminal Mentions Courts, Court 26, has been refurbished. This will allow the public to access justice in a safe, convenient and user-friendly environment.

New Subordinate Courts Complex

The years ahead are anticipated to bring many challenges to the Subordinate Courts. As the population continues to grow, the case load is expected to rise. An increasing demand for, and use of technology within the legal system is also anticipated. With alternative dispute resolution fast gaining acceptance, the demand for mediation will increase. There are also likely to be more litigants in person, as the population becomes



PERSONNEL

(from left to right)
MS JOYCE LOH
Senior Deputy Head
MRS YEOW-MAK YUEK LING
Asst Head
MS AGNES GOH
Management Support Officer,
Senior District Judge's Secretariat
MS DALBIR KAUR
Senior Asst Director



DEVELOPMENT SECTION

(from left to right)
MR CHOO BOON KION
Asst Director
MR NEZAM ZAKARIA
Senior Deputy Head
MS SENG LI LIAN
Technical Support Officer
MS PAPINDER KAUR
Deputy Director
MS ANGELINE KWAH
Asst Director



RESEARCH &
STATISTICS UNIT

(from left to right)
MS SITI RAIHANI HUSAINNI
Statistical Assistant
MS CHAN WAI YIN
Director
MS SEETO WEI PENG
Head
MS JOLIN ONG
Statistical Assistant



FINANCE SECTION

(from left to right)
MR T BALASUBRAMANIAM
Management Support Officer
MRS THERESA LEW
Senior Deputy Head
MR JOHN LEE
Senior Asst Director
MS PHUA THONG LENG
Senior Deputy Head

better educated, which in turn will create a demand for more and higher quality court information services. In order to create an environment that will meet these challenges and changes in the coming decades, the Subordinate Courts are currently evaluating the need for a new Subordinate Courts Complex, which will surpass the current main court premises in terms of architectural design, technology, knowledge management and other facilities.

3. STREAMLINING OPERATIONAL COSTS

Economy-Drive (ED) Initiatives

To further enhance resource management and usage, an internal ED Committee was set up. Comprising sectional managers, the ED Committee identifies ways to further improve operational efficiency and trim expenditure. These ways include better management of email storage usage, review of the maintenance expenditure for personal computers, and the introduction of a Gigabit Ethernet Network. Besides implementing these ED initiatives, the Committee also brainstorms with staff on identifying additional value-added initiatives.

Divisional Budgeting

The Divisional Budgeting system decentralises budgeting to the main Net Economic Value (NEV) Centres. It aims to further enhance costs consciousness and foster a proactive value creation mindset among sectional managers and operating staff. Based on the allocated Divisional Budget, NEV Centre managers discuss with their staff on ways to effectively prioritise their initiatives and projects, to achieve optimal value, enhance service quality and creatively seek to do more with less resources.

LIBRARY AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Research & Resource Centre (RRC) continues to provide significant research and information services to the judges and court administrators through its regular email alert services such as the RRC Info Alert Service, Weekly Digest, Spotlight Special Issues, Current Awareness Bulletin, Highlights of SLR/CLAS News, and eGazette. It also holds bi-monthly activities known as Buzz@JDC with varied themes such as Creativity & Innovation, Computers & IT and Family Matters. Its latest library e-service is the Sentencing Digest.

The RRC e-library intranet website was rolled out in March 2003. It offers a one-stop reference point for online resources and services. The RRC will continue to develop the intranet website and its resources, and remain an important information enabler and knowledge broker to the judges and court administrators.

As part of the RRC's ongoing efforts to provide better and more efficient e-library services, the Lexis-Nexis Intranet Solutions was launched on 18 July 2003. This is a customised one-stop legal research launchpad from the RRC e-library intranet. A training workshop on how to use the Lexis-Nexis Intranet Solutions has been held for judges and court administrators.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

(from left to right)
MS SARAH LIM
Technical Support Officer
MS ELYANA ISHAK
Senior Deputy Head
MS ZEENAT MOHD
Corporate Support Officer
MS JOYCELYN ONG
Corporate Support Officer



RESEARCH & RESOURCE CENTRE

(from left to right)
MS ROSYATI AHMAD
Senior Library Officer
MS ROZILAH ROHANI
Operations Support Officer
MDM NOORAENI AHMAD
Librarian
MS SITI FATIMAH
Library Officer

INFOCOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

“(The courts) must be pro-active and pro-change in order to remain resilient amidst discontinuities wrought by change. You must be able to identify emerging trends and driving forces.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

One of the benchmarks in the Strategic Framework is the effective use of information technology to increase access, convenience and ease of use of court services to assist the Subordinate Courts in enhancing the quality of justice.

In line with this, the Information Technology Department (ITD) identifies and applies new forms of technology and refines current technological infrastructure to continuously improve the system of administration for the Subordinate Courts. Through the efforts of the ITD, the Subordinate Courts have garnered numerous awards and accolades, and are currently one of the most technologically advanced court systems in the world.

1. AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Top-10 Court Website Award

The Subordinate Courts Internet website was conferred the Top-10 Court Website Award 2003 by JUSTICE SERVED™ in recognition for being a website that provides best of class information and electronic access to members of public. JUSTICE SERVED™, an alliance of court management and justice experts providing management services, consultation and training to courts, justice agencies and their partners in technology, reviewed more than 900 court-related websites in 2003 before selecting the award winners. The Subordinate Courts have the privilege of being the only winner outside of the United States of America (USA), as the other nine recipients are state courts and justice-related organisations within the USA.



Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) Outstanding Achievement Award

In February 2003, the Subordinate Courts ITD was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award by the GCIO of the Infocomm Development Authority. This award is presented to IT departments that have attained top scores in overall customer satisfaction in a survey conducted by the GCIO among its 26 customer sites (comprising ministries, organs of states and statutory boards). This is the second year running that the ITD has been presented with this award since the inception of the award in February 2002.

ISO9001 Surveillance Audit

The ITD has passed its second and third ISO9001 Surveillance Audits in June 2003 in full compliance with ISO9001 standards. It first obtained ISO9001 certification status in September 2001, based on requirements for the year 2000 version of the ISO9001 standards.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

(from left to right)
MR LARRY LAI
Head, Desktop / EUC
MR CHRISTOPHER CHAN
Technology Services Manager
MS KAREN WONG
Information System Manager
MS LOW POH YAN
Head, Projects
MS LILY YONG
Head, Projects
MS LIM LEH HOON
Senior IT Consultant

2. NEW INITIATIVES

Besides the Electronic Filing System (EFS), the Automatic Traffic Offence Management System (ATOMS) and Family Applications Management System (FAMS), various new initiatives were driven by the ITD in 2003:

Time Registration System

In July 2003, the Subordinate Courts soft-launched a Time Registration System for the Corporate Services Division and court officers. The System uses biometrics technology to allow staff to clock in and out of office using their finger prints.

Internet Queue Management System (IQMS)

In November 2003, the IQMS was implemented. The Internet-based system integrates the existing Electronic Queue Management System (EQMS) at the Havelock Building with a separate queue system that currently supports virtual hearings on the JusticeOnLine system. Hearing lists for civil cases are made available to lawyers via the Subordinate Courts JusticeOnLine website. Lawyers can also opt to be alerted via short messaging service (SMS) when their turn for case hearing is approaching so that they need not physically wait at the Civil Registry or outside the hearing chambers.

The Subordinate Courts comprise 60 District Judges, 11 Magistrates and 409 court administrators and corporate support personnel.

The Honourable the Chief Justice had in his 12th Annual Workplan Address highlighted the importance of visionary leadership and the acquisition of relevant core competencies by the judges and court administrators of the Subordinate Courts. As societal needs and expectations evolve over time, so must the people within the Subordinate Courts. It is upon an enlightened and progressive judiciary as well as a modern and efficient administration that the rule of law must rest.

The Subordinate Courts are ever mindful of the need to continuously invest and to develop our human resources. This is achieved through a variety of means, such as self-development courses, scholarships and awards, visits from foreign dignitaries, informal exchanges and the fostering of a community spirit within the courts.

1. REFINING THE QUALITY OF JUSTICE

Judicial Scholarships

As in previous years, a number of judges have been awarded scholarships to pursue postgraduate degrees and management courses, both in local and overseas institutions.

Magistrate Miranda Yeo was awarded a scholarship to pursue her Master's Degree in United States Law for Foreign Lawyers from 30 June 2003 to 24 May 2004 at Santa Clara University, USA.

District Judge Chia Wee Kiat was awarded a scholarship to pursue his Specialist LLM in Intellectual Property and Technology Law from 11 August 2003 to 24 April 2004 at the National University of Singapore.

Principal District Judge Koh Juat Jong attended the Legal Service Advanced Legal Programme from 11 August 2003 to 31 October 2003 at the National University of Singapore.

THE PROGRESSIVE JUDICIARY

“The mission of any organisation cannot be accomplished without visionary leadership. The Subordinate Courts must continue to attract the best and the brightest to lead and manage the organisation.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.



(First row, fourth from left) District Judge Mavis Chionh with fellow INSEAD participants in Fountainebleau, France



(From right to left) District Judge See Kee Oon with the Registrar of Companies and Businesses Ms Juthika Ramanathan and Senior Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court Mr Toh Han Li at Stanford University

Registrar Lau Wing Yum attended the Programme for Management Development from 14 September 2003 to 14 November 2003 at the Harvard Business School, USA.

District Judge Mavis Chionh attended the International Executive Programme from 23 February 2003 to 4 April 2003 at INSEAD, France.

District Judge See Kee Oon attended the Stanford Executive Programme from 22 June 2003 to 5 August 2003 at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, USA.

“I had the privilege of attending the six-week Stanford Executive Program (SEP), conducted by the Stanford Graduate School of Business from 22 June to 5 August 2003. The broad-based SEP catered well for the rich diversity of backgrounds and experience of its 119 participants, who hailed from organisations from all over the world. In addition to widening my perspectives on strategic leadership, I obtained deeper practical insight into general management theories and corporate best practices, many of which have been adopted within the Subordinate Courts.”

District Judge See Kee Oon on the six-week Stanford Executive Programme 2003

“I attended the International Executive Programme (IEP) at INSEAD in Fontainebleau, France, from 23 February to 4 April 2003. The IEP is a six-week programme designed to prepare mid-level managers for higher levels of responsibility and greater management challenges. For judges, the finance and accounting classes were particularly useful in demystifying the financial statements and jargon

we often encounter in commercial criminal and civil trials. Considering the judge-manager role which judges of the Subordinate Courts have been encouraged to adopt in the last decade or so, the classes on leadership, change management and organisational behaviour were also extremely relevant and helpful.

The small class size (40 participants) of the INSEAD IEP made it much easier to get the entire class to participate fully in discussions and debate. The emphasis on group work and group presentation further encouraged participation and the exchange of ideas; whilst the mix of cultures within the class (21 nationalities) also made for a broad range of interesting ideas from different perspectives. All in, the INSEAD IEP was an excellent learning opportunity. There were valuable lessons learnt in the classroom and outside of the classroom. It is an experience I would highly recommend.”

District Judge Mavis Chionh on the INSEAD International Executive Programme 2003

Court Administrator’s Scholarships

Since September 1998, the Subordinate Courts have also sponsored 16 deserving clerical employees for the Diploma in Para-Legal Studies at the Temasek Polytechnic.

Study Visits, Seminars and Symposiums

Our judges and staff have also represented the Singapore Judiciary in numerous international talks, seminars and symposiums.

Magistrate Gilbert Low attended the 6th Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA) Conference in Sydney, Australia from 5-6 June 2003.

The Senior District Judge Richard Magnus attended the 21st Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA) Conference in Perth, Western Australia from 19-21 September 2003, and the Leadership for the 21st Century: Chaos, Conflict and Courage Executive Programme at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University from 19-24 October 2003.

Ms Seeto Wei Peng, Head of the Research and Statistics Unit, attended the 8th Court Technology Conference organised by the National Centre for State Courts in Kansas City, USA from 28-30 October 2003

Academic Distinction

District Judge Cornie Ng, who was awarded an LSC Scholarship to pursue her LLM Studies in 2002 did us proud by being conferred the CALI Excellence for the Future Award (Fall 2002) by the Santa Clara University, USA.

2. KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

There is a strong culture of knowledge and experience sharing in the Subordinate Courts. Judges meet on a regular basis to discuss issues, share experiences, and update each other on the most recent developments in the law.

Links with Foreign Jurisdictions

As a global citizen, the Subordinate Courts maintain strong links with other judiciaries in the world. These ties allow us to exchange ideas in various areas of judicial administration with our distinguished visitors, and showcase our reforms and initiatives. In 2003, numerous eminent judicial and legal personalities visited the Subordinate Courts including:

- His Excellency Xiao Yang, Chief Justice and President of the Supreme People’s Court, People’s Republic of China;

- Lord Justice Henry Brooke, Appeal Court Judge of the Royal Courts of Justice, United Kingdom;
- Dr Hassan Saeed, Chief Judge of the Criminal Court and Juvenile Court of the Republic of Maldives;
- Mr Warwick Soden, Registrar of the Federal Court of Australia;
- Mr Kanok Indrambarya, Vice President of the Court of Appeal Region 4, Court of Justice, Thailand;
- Mrs Korbkul Witnitnaiyapak Kaewtip Provincial State Attorney, Ministry of Justice, Thailand;
- Ms Queeny Au-Yeung, Registrar (Acting) of the Hong Kong Final Court of Appeal; and
- delegations from various provinces of the People’s Republic of China.

“The Subordinate Courts of Singapore have attained outstanding results in judicial work and legal reform. I am proud of the progress which the courts have made. I hope to further enhance the exchange of knowledge and the extent of cooperation between the judiciaries of the two countries. May we strive to realise our common objective of a fair, just and efficient justice system.”

His Excellency Xiao Yang, Chief Justice and President of the Supreme People’s Court, People’s Republic of China, 8 September 2003

“We are very much impressed with the efficiency of the administration of justice within the Subordinate Courts.”

Mr Kanok Indrambarya, Vice President of the Court of Appeal Region 4, Court of Justice, Thailand, 30 October 2003



The Senior District Judge presenting the Justice Statement to His Excellency Xiao Yang, Chief Justice and President of the Supreme People's Court, People's Republic of China



Visit by Lord Justice Brooke, Appeal Court Judge of the Royal Courts of Justice, United Kingdom

Singapore Co-Operation Programme

Besides hosting individual visits by delegations from ASEAN member states, the Subordinate Courts have also been collaborating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct the Singapore Co-operation Programme. Through a series of training courses for judges, court administrators, government officials and legal officers from ASEAN member states in areas such as judicial reform and enhancing access to justice, the Subordinate Courts catalyse the exchange of views on common judicial and administration issues.

In July 2003, under the theme of 'Institutionalising Judicial and Administrative Processes in the Subordinate Courts', the Subordinate Courts conducted a programme for participants from ASEAN, detailing the efforts which the various Justice Divisions of the Subordinate Courts have put into strengthening and consolidating our work processes, judicial knowledge and practices.

Continuing Judicial Education (CJE)

As in previous years, Subordinate Courts judges conducted a series of internal refreshers as part of the CJE. These refreshers were held monthly, usually on Friday evenings, from March to November. Several

topics were covered, including a review of recent magistrates' appeals, aspects of child evidence, developments in civil law and procedure, the new matrimonial proceedings rules and an evaluation of enforcement and execution processes.

The Equal Treatment Bench Guide

In 2003, the Subordinate Courts published a 42-page Equal Treatment Bench Guide. This aims to be a practical guide to judges on areas which they must be conscious of in their daily encounters with the public. The Bench Guide is a recognition of the different needs and expectations of the large number and variety of people who use the services of the courts. It is also an expression of commitment by the judges of the Subordinate Courts to uphold equality before the law and to act fairly without any discrimination towards any community, individual or group.

Practical Law Course (PLC)

The Subordinate Courts judges were also involved in the PLC conducted by the Board of Legal Education. They gave lectures, conducted tutorials and shared their expertise and knowledge with law graduates from both the local and overseas universities.



Visit by Hong Kong Final Court of Appeal Registrar (Acting) Ms Queeny Au-Yeung

3. COMMUNITY IN THE COURTS

Staff Welfare

Together with the Judicial Recreation Club and the Social Development Unit, the Subordinate Courts organised and promoted social, cultural, sports, health and other activities for the welfare and well-being of our staff. These included the New Year and Hari Raya Celebrations, Annual Judiciary Games, Annual Dinner and Dance, and Family Day. As part of our efforts to encourage healthy lifestyles amongst our staff, health screening and in-house health talks were organized. Certain days of the year were also designated 'Fruits Day' when fruits were distributed to everyone in the Subordinate Courts. The Subordinate Courts were awarded the Singapore H.E.A.L.T.H. Award (Bronze) in July 2003.

Carnival @ Courthouse Square and National Day Observance Ceremony

Judges and staff, with their family members, celebrated National Day with a carnival at the Courthouse Square. A total of \$9,394, being proceeds from the sale of various items, a pre-carnival on-line auction and car wash, was donated to the Children's Cancer Foundation



Judges of the Subordinate Courts with the Singapore Co-operation Programme participants

– the Subordinate Courts' adopted charity. The Subordinate Courts' National Day Observance Ceremony was held thereafter on the same day.

Community Chest SHARE Fund Raising Programme

The Subordinate Courts showed their support for Community Chest by galvanising the judges and staff to participate in the monthly donation programme. In appreciation of their efforts, the Subordinate Courts will qualify for the SHARE Achiever Award in 2004.

Subordinate Courts Benchmark Awards for Volunteerism

Recognising the key role that volunteers perform in the administration of justice, the Subordinate Courts launched the inaugural Subordinate Courts Benchmark Awards for Volunteerism at the Subordinate Courts 12th Workplan Seminar. The winners were:

- Associate Professor Ann Wee (Individual);
- Ms Ellen Lee Gek Hoon (Individual Advocate & Solicitor); and
- The Singapore Children's Society (Corporate Volunteer)



Dance Performance at the Subordinate Courts National Day Observance Ceremony



Subordinate Courts Hari Raya and Deepavali Celebrations



Mr Lee Chun Yip receiving the H.E.A.L.T.H. Award from Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Acting Minister for Health



Carnival @ Courthouse Square



Ms Ellen Lee, winner of the Individual Advocate and Solicitor Volunteer Award receiving her award from The Honourable the Chief Justice



Mr Koh Choon Hui, Chairman of the Singapore Children's Society, receiving the Corporate Volunteer Award from The Honourable the Chief Justice

4. NATIONAL HONOURS

In recognition of their dedicated and loyal service to the Subordinate Courts and the nation, the following judges and staff of the Subordinate Courts were awarded:

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (GOLD) (BAR)

Senior District Judge Richard Magnus



CITATION

Senior District Judge Richard Magnus's leadership has transformed the Subordinate Courts into a world-class judiciary and key public institution.

In close consultation with The Honourable the Chief Justice, he has initiated, implemented, and institutionalised critical and innovative judicial reforms over the last 11 years. These have firmly anchored Singapore's justice fundamentals and structure, leading to a remarkable improvement in the quality of justice and decisions at the Subordinate Courts, which are today considered among the world's best.

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (BRONZE)

District Judge Chia Wee Kiat

THE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Mr Donald Koh

THE EFFICIENCY MEDAL

Ms Papinder Pal Kaur

THE LONG SERVICE MEDAL (25 YEARS OF SERVICE)

District Judge Tan Puay Boon

District Judge Doris Lai

Ms Hatimah binte Nawi

Mr Teo Khwa Chwee

Mr Lim Geok Kwee

“The receipt of the Long Service Medal marks the passage of a quarter of a century. Looking back, this time seemed to have flown by in the wink of an eye. Yet, a great many changes have taken place. For example, computers have become the everyday objects they are now; our relationship with the public whom we serve keeps evolving as citizens become more conscious of their rights; and young officers are also exposed to a greater variety of work, including work from outside their schemes of service. Our country has also been buffeted by events taking place both outside and inside the country, like the Asian Financial Crisis and SARS.

Another quarter of a century will no doubt throw up more changes, including those that are beyond present imagination. To better serve our nation and the public, we will have to continue to be open and flexible to meet new challenges. I am grateful to colleagues and staff, past and present, who have unstintingly given me their help and support in my work. They have played no small part in my receipt of this award. I am indeed privileged to be able to serve with them, and will continue to do so to the best of my ability.”

District Judge Tan Puay Boon, recipient of The Long Service Medal 2003 (25 years of service)

“As the Chief Court Officer, I oversaw and managed matters and human resources from a broad perspective. I was given the opportunity to encourage my fellow colleagues to become positively involved and actively engaged in the Subordinate Courts’ vision of primus inter pares.

The Commendation Award is for all the officers in the court officers’ section. It is a reflection of

their contributions and commitment to the Subordinate Courts and to the justice constituents. I am privileged and honoured to receive it on their behalf.”

Mr Donald Koh, recipient of The Commendation Medal 2003

“It is an honour to receive this award. I appreciate the opportunities given to me to learn and grow in this organisation. I am especially grateful to everyone who has helped me to fulfil my responsibilities efficiently.”

Ms Papinder Kaur, recipient of The Efficiency Medal 2003



NATIONAL DAY AWARD WINNERS (from left to right) District Judge Tan Puay Boon (The Long Service Medal), Ms Papinder Kaur (The Efficiency Medal), Mr Donald Koh (The Commendation Medal)

5. OTHER AWARDS

SUBORDINATE COURTS 10-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

District Judge Hamidah Bte Ibrahim
District Judge Wilfred Emily Kaiserene
District Judge Jasvender Kaur
District Judge Goh Eng Chiang Christopher
Ms Papinder Pal Kaur
Mr Muhamad Nezam b Zakaria
Mr Wong Lock Seng
Mr Koo Tong Hoong
Ms Wong Li Li
Ms Rageswari d/o Suppiah
Mr Zaini b Abu Hassan
Ms Rohaida bte Satari
Ms Tumirah Abdullah Osman
Ms Salina bte Sinain
Ms Hawa bte Harun
Mrs Suseela Devi Ramesh
Ms E Mangalagowri
Ms Shakidaah Sahul Hameed
Ms Noor Israni Ibrahim
Ms Suminah bte Buang
Ms Lim Kuan Eng
Mr Johari Bin Satiman
Ms Rozita Bte Mahmud
Mdm Amnah bte Ali
Ms Noor Azlinah bte Sharif

COURT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR 2003 AWARDS

Ms Agnes Goh Li Khim
Ms Supaletchumi Suppiah
Mr Tan Swan Liang

“I have been with the Subordinate Courts for the past 16 years. Being a recipient of the Court Administrator of the Year Award will add to the fond memories which I have of the Subordinate Courts. I am also grateful to be awarded a scholarship to pursue the Diploma in paralegal studies. It was not easy to strike a balance between work, study and

family commitments. Now that I have completed the course, I must say that the sacrifice is worth it. I shall apply the knowledge gained in my work and continue to strive to serve the Subordinate Courts effectively and efficiently.”

Ms Supaletchumi Suppiah, recipient of the Court Administrator’s Scholarship and Court Administrator of the year 2003 award

“Time flies. I have been with the Subordinate Courts for more than three decades. With the passage of time, I have witnessed the rapid transformation of the Subordinate Courts’ structure and facilities. Justice is now dispensed with timeliness and expedition. The Subordinate Courts have also achieved the distinction of being a world class judiciary. To me, this award is the culmination of my years of service to the courts. I recognise the contribution and efforts made by my teammates.”

Mr Tan Swan Liang, recipient of the Court Administrator of the year 2003 Award



COURT ADMINISTRATORS AWARD (from left to right) Mr Tan Swan Liang, Ms Agnes Goh, Ms Supaletchumi Suppiah

ANCHORING JUSTICE

“The Subordinate Courts have initiated fundamental judicial and administrative reforms over the past twelve years. The challenge now is to anchor these reforms and initiatives. It is only with a firm anchor in justice, and the due process of justice, that we can uphold the rule of law in the land as our nation traverses these troubled times.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

The Subordinate Courts pursue the objectives of dispensing justice fairly, justly and efficiently, to the public and nation. In times of turbulence and uncertainty, such fundamentals are all the more critical. As The Honourable the Chief Justice said, the vision for the Judiciary should not be separated from that of the society and the nation which it serves. His vision for the Subordinate Courts is that of a first class Judiciary, no matter how the environment changes.

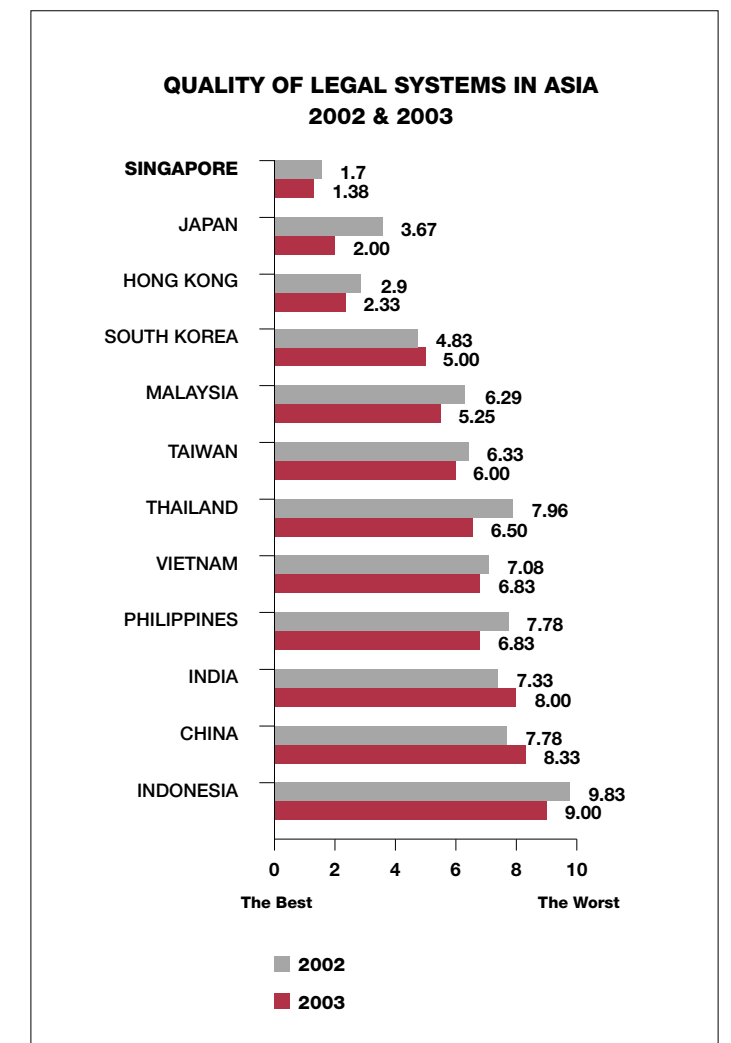
In pursuing these objectives to achieve this vision, the Subordinate Courts will relentlessly continue with reforms and initiatives, to enhance public trust and confidence in the Singapore judicial system, protect public interests and promote greater accessibility to justice. The Subordinate Courts have started institutionalising best practices and entrenching core values in order to ensure the long term sustainability of our judicial system which will weather the storms of uncertainty and change, and stand the test of time. We will continue to remain a firm anchor for justice.

1. MEASURING OURSELVES AGAINST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The Singapore Legal System and Judiciary continued to lead the world in 2003, excelling in various regional and international rankings and studies conducted by different eminent organisations. The Subordinate Courts have played their part in ensuring that the Singapore Judiciary is primus inter pares.

Political and Economic Risks Consultancy (PERC)
The PERC is an international consulting firm specialising in strategic business information and analysis for companies doing business in East and Southeast Asia. PERC publishes Comparative Country Risk Reports. The Comparative Country Risk Reports, by surveying expatriates working in Asia, rates the

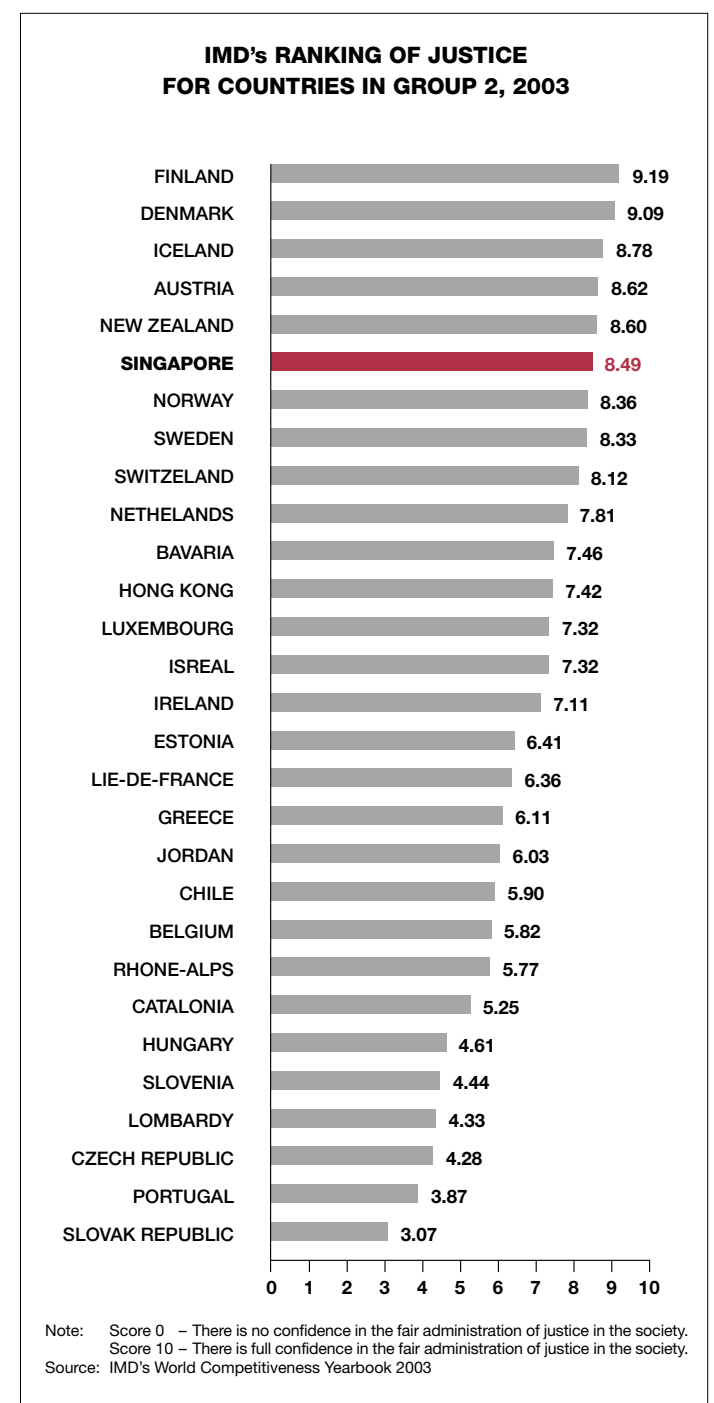
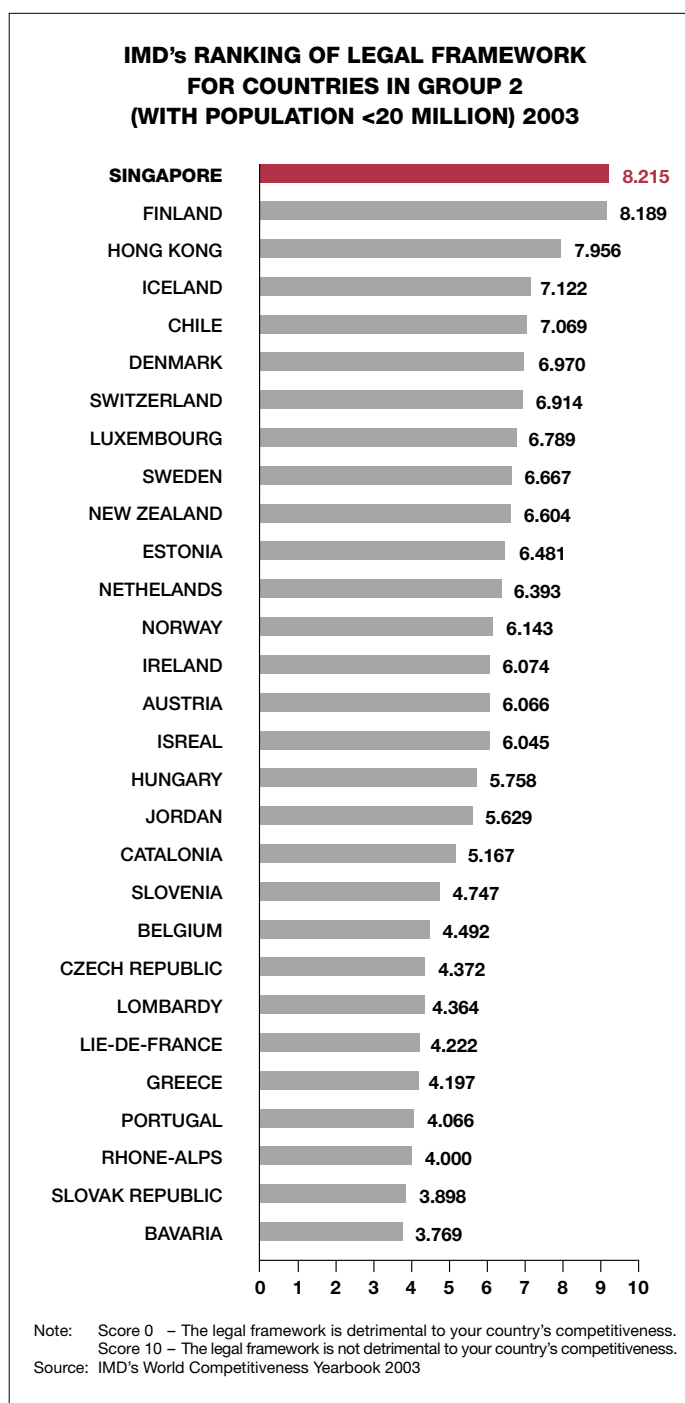
quality of the legal system and the Judiciary in Singapore relative to other countries in the Asia Region, such as Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia. In 2003, Singapore maintained its top position in Asia for the overall integrity and quality of the legal system and showed a significant improvement from a score of 3.28 in 2001 and 1.7 in 2002 to 1.38 in 2003. Singapore’s score surpassed the score for the United States (1.98) and Australia (1.70). This signified that foreign investors and businesses are confident that the Singapore Judiciary will match if not surpass the standards of the legal systems in their home countries.



International Institute for Management Development (IMD)

The Swiss-based IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook provides a world-wide reference point on the competitiveness and performance of countries. In the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2003, a total of 59

countries were ranked compared to 49 in the last two years. These 59 countries were divided into two groups according to whether they have a population of more or less than 20 million. In the 2003 assessment of the national legal framework and justice, Singapore was ranked 1st and 6th respectively among the countries in its group.



2. SUBORDINATE COURTS CASELOAD

The Subordinate Courts handle more than 95% of all cases entering the judicial system in Singapore. In 2003, a total of 358,740 matters were received by the Subordinate Courts. This includes 219,120 criminal matters, 86,720 civil matters, 19,060 family and juvenile matters and 33,840 Small Claims Tribunals cases.

CASELOAD PROFILE	2002	2003 ^P
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION		
Criminal Mentions		
- Criminal ⁽¹⁾	66,417	69,710
- Departmental/Statutory Board	142,623	105,620
- Traffic	31,848	28,240
Special Courts		
- Coroner	3,375	4,370
Others		
- Magistrates' Complaints	5,939	9,610
- Police Summons	1,502	1,570
	251,704	219,120
CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION		
Originating Processes		
- Writs of Summons (DC & MC)	44,967	53,180
- Originating Summons	1,025	830
- Probate	2,785	2,970
Interlocutory Applications		
- Summons-in-Chambers ⁽²⁾	22,232	20,840
- Summons for Directions (O.25/37)	4,840	5,950
- Summary Judgment (O.14)	1,699	1,240
Others		
- Taxation	1,041	520
- Assessment of Damages	798	1,190
	79,387	86,720
e@dr Centre		
No. of Cases Mediated	7,329	7,390
SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS		
No. of Claims Filed	36,610	33,840

CASELOAD PROFILE	2002	2003 ^P
FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVISION		
Family Justice Division		
Maintenance & Family Violence	10,651	11,130
Divorce Petitions Filed	4,849	4,410
Originating Summons	237	230
Adoption	693	700
Juvenile Justice Division		
No. of Applications	2,461	2,590
	18,891	19,060
ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS		
Writs filed with Bailiff's Section		
- Writs of Seizure & Sale	10,277	11,380
- Writs of Seizure & Sale @ SCT ⁽³⁾	1,600	3,010
- Writs of Possession	252	180
- Writs of Distress	524	360
- Warrant to Levy (Fine)	98	90
- Warrant of Attachment against Surety	450	580
- Warrant of Levy (CPF)	620	810
- Others	7	10
	13,828	16,420
Lodged with Warrant Section		
- Warrant of Arrest (Issued)	56,564	46,640 ⁽⁴⁾
- Notice of Surety	1,249	1,440
- Warrant of Attachment	358	290
- Warrant of Levy	990	980
- Search Warrant	404	460
	59,565	49,810

^P Preliminary: Figures are estimated based on caseload profile from Jan-Sep 2003.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Includes DAC, MAC, DI, OR/OA, MOM, MPA, NPB & NS cases.

⁽²⁾ Excludes O.25/37.

⁽³⁾ Bailiff @ SCT started in July 2002. There is no data prior to July 2002.

⁽⁴⁾ Only includes Warrants of Arrest Issued by the Warrant Section.

CASES DEALT WITH	2002	2003 ^P
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION		
Criminal Mentions		
- Criminal ⁽¹⁾	61,147	64,150
- Departmental/Statutory Board	130,900	89,900
- Traffic	26,764	25,130
Special Courts		
- Coroner	3,148	3,170
Others		
- Magistrate's Complaints	2,674	2,220
- Police Summons	1,345	1,350
	225,978	185,920
CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION		
Originating Processes		
- Writs of Summons (DC & MC) ⁽²⁾	37,149	43,650
- Probate	2,630	2,960
Interlocutory Applications		
- Summons-in-Chambers (includes O.25/37 & O.14) ⁽³⁾	28,763	27,760
Others		
- Taxation	1,012	550
- Assessment of Damages	342	400
	69,896	75,320
e@dr Centre		
No. of Cases Disposed	6,543	7,070
SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS		
No. of Claims Disposed of	40,132	36,380

CASES DEALT WITH	2002	2003 ^P
FAMILY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVISION		
Family Justice Division		
Maintenance & Family Violence	9,015	9,200
Divorce Petitions Filed	4,444	4,430
Originating Summons	191	230
Adoption	811	730
Juvenile Justice Division		
No. of Cases Disposed	1,973	1,990
	16,434	16,580
ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS		
Writs filed with Bailiff's Section		
- Writs of Seizure & Sale	1,846	1,960
- Writs of Seizure & Sale @ SCT ⁽⁴⁾	253	1,750
- Writs of Possession	79	40
- Writs of Distress	131	100
- Others	197	20
Lodged with Warrant Section		
- Warrant of Arrest (Processed)	64,934	60,680
	67,440	64,550

^P Preliminary: Figures are estimated based on Jan-Sep 2003.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Includes DAC, MAC, DI, OR/OA, MOM, MPA, NPB & NS cases.

⁽²⁾ Includes cases where no action was taken by the plaintiffs for six months and hence lapsed.

⁽³⁾ Separate figures for Summons-in-Chambers & Summons for Direction & Summary Judgment disposed of are not available.

⁽⁴⁾ Bailiff @ SCT started in July 2002. There is no data prior to July 2002.

3. SUBORDINATE COURTS FINANCIAL PROFILE

The Subordinate Courts is a public institution of excellence which focuses upon the effective use of resources, budgeting prudence, financial transparency and rigorous cost control and management. These practices allow the Subordinate Courts to maximise our resources to support a myriad of services and initiatives to the public. These include investments in our people, facilities and technology to better serve our court users.

ACTIVITY / ACCOUNT	FY2002 BUDGET	FY2002 ACTUAL
Maintenance Expenses (buildings & equipment)	4,069,920	4,028,557.35
	4,069,920	4,028,557.35
Rental of Office Premises & Equipment	791,200	789,315.58
	791,200	789,315.58
Public Utilities	1,270,000	1,265,798.93
	1,270,000	1,265,798.93
Training, Welfare & Public Relations		
Local Training Courses, Workshops & Seminars	160,000	158,308.12
Overseas Training Courses	8,000	7,969.37
Overseas Conferences	17,000	16,647.16
Scholarship	202,000	201,604.00
Staff Recreation & Welfare	20,000	17,389.29
Dental & Medical Subsidy	182,200	180,128.48
Staff Suggestion & Productivity Schemes	5,600	5,596.59
Managing For Excellence Award	49,330	49,325.91
Long Service Awards	21,000	20,583.32
Campaigns & Exhibitions	1,500	1,500.00
Advertising	1,000	918.24
Membership of Overseas Organisations	15,000	8,146.73
	682,630	668,117.21

ACTIVITY / ACCOUNT	FY2002 BUDGET	FY2002 ACTUAL
Support Services		
Office Supplies	387,300	381,363.19
Library Materials	520,000	515,538.08
Transport Claims	13,000	12,842.47
Telecommunications & Postage	376,600	373,860.81
Data Transmission	220,000	210,705.79
Data Centre Charges	775,000	772,692.12
Computer Services	4,510,000	4,508,804.22
Professional & Consultancy Services	326,000	325,055.19
Books, Publications & Brochures	132,000	130,149.00
CISCO & Security Services	212,000	211,041.00
Security Systems	265,000	263,737.00
Administrative Services	2,525,000	2,524,333.61
Purchase of Equipment	20,000	19,716.99
Witness Allowances & Payments to Foreign Language Interpreters	715,000	714,254.98
	10,996,900	10,964,094.45
Expenditure On Manpower		
Legal & Support Services	29,901,200	29,500,328.78
	29,901,200	29,500,328.78
Development Projects	5,058,370	5,051,743.33
	5,058,370	5,051,743.33
Total	52,770,220	52,267,955.63

“I have the faith that the Senior District Judge and each one of you in the Subordinate Courts will serve the ends of justice well in these trying times. Our task is to uphold the rule of law through the fair administration of justice. Our gratitude to our forefathers, duty to posterity, and allegiance to our nation, make it imperative that we perform this task faithfully. Let the rule of law rest upon the anchor of justice.”

The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pung How, Keynote Address at the Subordinate Courts 12th Annual Workplan 2003/2004 on 17 May 2003.

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