

**JUDICIARY-WIDE INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY APPOINTED JUDICIAL
COMMISSIONERS AND JUDICIAL OFFICERS**

**OPENING ADDRESS BY CHIEF JUSTICE SUNDARESH MENON
ON TUE, 6 OCT 2015 @ 9 AM @ CONFERENCE ROOM (B1), SUPREME COURT**

Dear colleagues,

1. Good morning and let me first extend a very warm welcome to our colleagues from Brunei Darussalam and Sri Lanka for joining us in this 4-day programme. Our colleagues:

From the Bandar Seri Begawan Magistrate's Court are

- ❖ Magistrate Dewi Norlelawati Hamid
- ❖ Magistrate Ervy Sufitriana Rahman

And from the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, are

- ❖ Justice Shanthy Eva Wanasundera,

2. I also specially wish to welcome 27 of our newly appointed Judicial Commissioners and Judicial Officers (JOs) who are participating in this inaugural Judiciary-Wide Induction Programme. I, once again, take this opportunity to extend to you my heartiest congratulations on your appointment and my sincerest wishes for a long, happy and immensely satisfying career as Judges.

3. We are exactly 1 month short (to the very day) of 3 years since I took office as Chief Justice and among the foundational ideas I had discussed at that time with my

judicial colleagues was my commitment to work towards the idea of One Judiciary. While it is true that we do our work in different courts, I did not find the notion of a hierarchical judicial culture to be helpful in promoting the opportunities for day-to-day 'cross-fertilisation' and the development of fresh ideas. In fact, I fear that such an approach might tend to stifle learning and innovation and breed insularity. I believe that breaking down the barriers that segregate first instance Judges from appellate Judges, for instance, will enhance interaction and promote the free exchange of ideas and thoughts. This is especially critical for our Judiciary because we are so small with less than 200 Judges nation-wide. On the other hand, our modest size makes it easier for us to bond and to strengthen cohesiveness within our community if we put our minds to the task.

4. This was one of the ideas that drove me to establish the Singapore Judicial College (SJC), where all our Judges can come together and learn from each other. After less than a year in existence, the College has already helped us make remarkable progress towards the goal of One Judiciary. In its judicial education programmes, judges of the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts have come together to learn from and with one another. Since the beginning of this year, SJC has conducted more than 40 judicial education programmes under the Local Wing of the College, as a result of which Judges and Judicial Officers have had the opportunity to meet about once a week.

5. At a wider level, the presence of our colleagues from abroad at this Programme, as well as the presence of our International Judges in the Singapore International Commercial Court, serves to remind us that we are all part of a larger global family of Judges who are bound by a common purpose and desire to do right. These transnational exchanges will further open our minds to the practices of our judicial colleagues from other jurisdictions.

6. I mooted the idea of a Judiciary-Wide Induction Programme to the SJC at the beginning of this year and I am delighted that the College promptly took up the challenge to plan for this. Considering that 27 Judicial Commissioners and Judicial Officers have been appointed since September 2014, this Induction Programme could not have been timelier. In keeping with the notion of One Judiciary, newly appointed Judicial Commissioners of the Supreme Court and Judicial Officers from the first instance courts will come together over the next few days to learn and discuss the fundamentals of being a good and effective judge. For convenience, I have termed this phase of the training of new Judges as Part B of the Induction Programme.

7. Part A on the other hand is the Orientation Program conducted immediately on appointment and which covers the 'nuts and bolts' of the daily operations of the court that every new Judge and Judicial Officer would have to come to grips with in order to conduct hearings. Hence, much of Part A of the Induction Programme involves Judges and Judicial Officers sitting-in to observe different types of hearings, as well as receiving briefings or having discussions and conversations with other more Senior Judges. As for

Part B of the Induction Programme, this 4-day programme is akin to a judicial retreat. Having undertaken judicial duties for several months, most of you would already have some idea as to what is entailed in being a Judge. At its finest, judicial work promises the satisfaction of work that consists, in essence, of simply doing the right thing each day and being entrusted with the unique privilege and opportunity to dispense justice. But along with this comes the usual stresses of the job such as having to deal with difficult litigants and their counsel, writing judgments and recognizing that there are constraints on your conduct that apply both on and off the Bench as a result of your accepting this vital appointment.

8. Judging is a unique career path in the law. Of course the knowledge and skills we acquire in our past lives as lawyers, law academics or legal officers will give us the basic equipment to undertake the task of judging; but it would be wrong to pretend that it is simply a matter of changing the direction you happen to face when in the courtroom. Judging is much more than that and it is this recognition that prompted me to ask the College to design a customized program that will essentially be conducted by Judges for Judges. When I first had sight of the draft programme, I was delighted. It far surpasses anything we have hitherto done to prepare one for a judicial career. So here is a snapshot of what you can expect in the next 4 days: (i) Transitioning to the Bench; (ii) Judicial Health; (iii) Judicial Conduct; (iv) Managing Court Hearings (including managing a “Hellish Trial”); (v) Handling Difficult Litigants; (vi) Forensic matters such as assessing Credibility of Witnesses; (vii) Concurrent Tracks on Civil, Criminal and Family Procedural

Laws; (viii) Maintaining Judicial Authority in the Courtroom; (ix) Judgment Writing and (x) Optimising Your Time and Resources. This gives you a sense of the breadth of the material that you will be exposed to.

9. I also cannot over-emphasise how important it is for Judges to have a good appreciation of the environment in which they will be operating. An awareness of what is incubating will sensitize Judges to possible pitfalls and challenges when deciding a case. I am therefore very pleased that the SJC has arranged two special talks by guest speakers ie *“Changing Landscapes in Singapore”* by Mr Peter Ho, former Head of the Civil Service and *“Cyber Security and the Judge”* by Mr Sean Duca, Regional Chief Technology Officer, Palo Alto Network, arranged through the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, Cyber Security Agency and Singapore infocomm Technology Federation. I have no doubt that you will be enriched at the end of the next 4 days.

10. At the same time, it is not all work! The week’s programme will conclude with a closing dinner featuring a poolside BBQ, and I have been told that despite being poolside, you will dine in air-conditioned comfort. That may sound like a contradiction in terms but we shall doubtless be surprised and I am sure we will all have a splendid evening together.

11. I look forward to interacting with you the next 4 days. Besides the sessions that I am conducting, I’ll take time to join you in the discussions when I can. Finally, let me again wish you a fruitful, memorable and enriching 4 days at this inaugural, indeed

historical, Judiciary-Wide Induction Programme for Newly Appointed Judicial Commissioners and Judicial Officers.

SUNDARESH MENON
CHIEF JUSTICE
6 OCTOBER 2015