

**MASS CALL ADDRESS 2020:  
LIVING UP TO THE CALL IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC**

Tuesday, 25 August 2020

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon  
Supreme Court of Singapore

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**I. Introduction**

1. Good morning. Let me begin by extending my warmest congratulations to all of you on your call to the Bar and to welcome you to the profession. Today you play a small role in the making of legal history as you participate in the first mass call in Singapore conducted using remote communication technology. The fact that we gather today in this way to admit new members to the Bar is a sign of the unprecedented times that we live in. These are also times of considerable uncertainty. You join the profession in the midst of a pandemic that remains very much a threat to societies around the world, and which has had a profound impact on the global economy and the ways in which we live, work, and interact.
  
2. That these are challenging times should not in any way diminish the pride in the accomplishments that have brought you here today, nor dampen your hopes and aspirations for your careers in the profession you now join. While some of you may find that the circumstances in which you begin your career as a practising lawyer are far removed from

anything that you might have imagined upon your graduation from law school, be assured that this pandemic – like the numerous challenges you have already faced – will eventually pass. Today I want to encourage you to harness the same resolve and resourcefulness that have carried you through past challenges, to boldly confront those of today, in the form of the pandemic and its effect on our society and the legal profession, and to prepare yourselves to take advantage of the new opportunities that will emerge.

## **II. We are all in this together**

3. In considering how COVID-19 will affect your first steps in the profession, I suggest that it is critical to retain a sense of perspective; and that informs us that this crisis affects *everyone* – not just lawyers or even Singaporeans, but indeed virtually every industry, community, and nation. Our Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong observed in a recent national broadcast that COVID-19 is “not only a public health issue” but “also a serious economic, social and political problem”, and “the most dangerous crisis humanity has faced in a very long time”.<sup>1</sup>
4. These hard truths are borne out by a quick survey of the situation around the world. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, Singapore, “National Broadcast by PM Lee Hsien Loong on 7 June 2020” (7 June 2020): <[pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/National-Broadcast-PM-Lee-Hsien-Loong-COVID-19](http://pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/National-Broadcast-PM-Lee-Hsien-Loong-COVID-19)>.

Development reported that the number of job losses in developed economies in the first months of the pandemic has been 10 times greater than that experienced during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, and that the pandemic has wiped out all gains in the labour market since the end of that crisis.<sup>2</sup> The European Commission has also predicted that the economies of Italy, Spain and France will shrink by more than 10% this year.<sup>3</sup>

5. Virtually no nation has been left unscarred by the pandemic, and Singapore is no exception. According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, our economy contracted by 13.2% in the second quarter of this year on a year-on-year basis,<sup>4</sup> marking the worst quarterly performance on record.<sup>5</sup>

6. The legal profession too, both locally and globally, has not been spared. In a survey conducted by the UK Bar Council in April 2020, 56% of

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<sup>2</sup> Liz Alderman and Matina Stevis-Gridneff, The New York Times, “The Pandemic’s Economic Damage is Growing” (7 July 2020): <[nytimes.com/2020/07/07/business/EU-OECD-coronavirus-economic-reports.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/07/business/EU-OECD-coronavirus-economic-reports.html)>, citing OECD Employment Outlook 2020, “Worker Security and the COVID-19 Crisis”: <[oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1686c758-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/1686c758-en](https://oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1686c758-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/1686c758-en)>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, citing European Commission, “Summer 2020 Economic Forecast: An even deeper recession with wider divergences”: <[ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1269](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1269)>.

<sup>4</sup> MTI Press Release, “MTI Narrows 2020 GDP Growth Forecast to “-7.0 to -5.0 Per Cent” (11 August 2020): <<https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Releases/2020/08/MTI-Narrows-2020-GDP-Growth-Forecast>>.

<sup>5</sup> CNA, “We are not returning to a pre-COVID-19 world’: Chan Chun Sing maps out ‘new path’ for Singapore” (11 August 2020): <[channelnewsasia.com/news/business/covid-19-singapore-new-path-chan-chun-sing-13009506](https://channelnewsasia.com/news/business/covid-19-singapore-new-path-chan-chun-sing-13009506)>.

surveyed barristers responded that without financial aid, they would not be able to survive financially for the following six months; and that number rose to 77% when the time horizon was extended to a year.<sup>6</sup> Law firms in the US have been forced to cut staff and wages as fewer new transactions are struck, negotiations on existing deals are put on hold, and courts remain closed or are minimally operational.<sup>7</sup>

7. Closer to home, the Singapore Academy of Law surveyed local practitioners and in-house counsel in April this year to better understand how the profession had been impacted by the pandemic. 83% of the respondents, numbering about 400 in total, reported a decrease in new matters and in revenue.<sup>8</sup> Several local law firms initially responded to the crisis by freezing increments, reducing hiring, and cutting partner drawings, and many have since enhanced those measures by implementing firm-wide wage cuts that affect partners, junior associates, and staff members alike.<sup>9</sup> The pandemic may also have had

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<sup>6</sup> The Bar Council, "Bar Council Survey April 2020: Key Findings" (April 2020): <[https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/resource/bar-survey-summary-findings-april-2020.html?dm\\_i=4CGD,TSSM,41V9UU,3M1ZX,1](https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/resource/bar-survey-summary-findings-april-2020.html?dm_i=4CGD,TSSM,41V9UU,3M1ZX,1)>.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Morath, Harriet Torry and Gwynn Guilford, The Wall Street Journal, "A Second Round of Coronavirus Layoffs Has Begun. No One Is Safe." (14 April 2020): <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-second-round-of-coronavirus-layoffs-has-begun-no-one-is-safe-11586872387?mod=e2fb&fbclid=IwAR08IvaDhvsvrGxwzZkBN3weZst424ApsRLHEJjXnBz88V1gjRXAkICKZw>>.

<sup>8</sup> SAL Press Release, "Singapore Academy of Law Rolls out \$1.9 million in support package to help members amid COVID-19" (7 May 2020): <<https://www.sal.org.sg/node/1116>>.

<sup>9</sup> Kelly Ng, The Business Times, "Law firms take more extensive cuts amid unprecedented crisis" (11 August 2020): <<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/companies-markets/law-firms-take-more-extensive-cuts-amid-unprecedented-crisis>>.

an adverse effect on the employment prospects of new law graduates seeking employment in the profession. At the rehearsal for this Mass Call, you were asked to complete an anonymous survey. We received a total of 373 responses, representing about 70% of those entering the profession through this year's Mass Call. Of those who responded, about 19% reported that they are still searching for employment, and 62 out of that number have been doing so at some point since the onset of the pandemic.

8. While these figures are concerning, it is important to note that the impact of COVID-19 on the profession, as it has been on society and the economy as a whole, has been uneven. In-house lawyers, for example, have reported an increase in work, and in particular a growing demand for advice on matters relating to crisis management, renegotiation of contracts, and employment matters.<sup>10</sup> There has also been a reported surge in legal work in the areas of insolvency and restructuring, regulatory compliance, litigation, employment law, and building and construction law.<sup>11</sup> These are clear signs that there *are* opportunities for

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<sup>10</sup> SAL Press Release, "Singapore Academy of Law Rolls out \$1.9 million in support package to help members amid COVID-19" (7 May 2020): <<https://www.sal.org.sg/node/1116>>.

<sup>11</sup> Lizzie Meager, International Financial Law Review, "Survey: In-house will send Covid litigation work to law firms" (8 June 2020): <<https://www.iflr.com/article/b1lzc917x0s0w/survey-in-house-will-send-covid-litigation-work-to-law-firms>>, Elizabeth Beattie, Asian Legal Business, "The Virus Crisis" (12 June 2020): <<https://www.legalbusinessonline.com/features/virus-crisis/79543>> and Stephen Mulrenan, International Bar Association, "Covid-19: Asian law firms turn attention to post-pandemic world" (23 April 2020): <<https://www.ibanet.org/Article/NewDetail.aspx?ArticleUid=0296E3BF-F5A5-4F41-A46A-FE52DEB7B1B0>>.

legal professionals even in the midst of this crisis.

### **III. We will recover**

9. History is often our best teacher when we are presented with daunting and unfamiliar challenges, and a review of the history of past crises will reveal that this pandemic, while perhaps outsized in scale and in terms of its disruptive effects, will pass.
  
10. Looking back, in 1985, we experienced our first post-independence recession. That crisis took many by surprise as the booming construction sector initially masked dips in other sectors.<sup>12</sup> A confluence of external and internal factors pushed us into a recession by the second quarter of 1985.<sup>13</sup> In June 1985, our unemployment rate rose to 4.1% from 2.9% in the preceding 4 years.<sup>14</sup> We came out of the recession after adopting measures to reduce business costs, including CPF contribution rates and tax rates.<sup>15</sup> We also took the opportunity to restructure our economy, with the government forming an Economic

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<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Rigg, "Singapore and the Recession of 1985" (1988) *Asian Survey* 340 ("Rigg") at p 344, HistorySG, National Library Board, "Singapore experiences its first post-independence recession" ("HistorySG"): <<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/9f9489cf-5432-4797-bf66-fd1b3bab7a2b#10>>, Woo Jun Jie, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, "Singapore's approach to Managing Economic Crises" (2018) ("Woo") at p 9: <[https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/case-studies/singapores\\_approach\\_to\\_managing\\_economic\\_crises\\_22052018\\_lowres.pdf?sfvrsn=7387660a\\_0](https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/case-studies/singapores_approach_to_managing_economic_crises_22052018_lowres.pdf?sfvrsn=7387660a_0)>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> HistorySG.

<sup>15</sup> Rigg at p 349, History SG and Woo at p 9.

Committee that year to identify new areas of growth.<sup>16</sup> Our efforts enabled us to make a swift recovery, with a return to positive growth by the second quarter of 1986.<sup>17</sup>

11. A little over a decade later, the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis devastated swathes of our economy<sup>18</sup> at a time when Singapore was seeking to expand its economic footprint in the region.<sup>19</sup> Eschewing protectionism, we accelerated plans to liberalise various sectors of our economy, including the legal sector. Partly as a result of that, our legal sector experienced immense growth in areas such as international arbitration, mediation, litigation, and specialised areas of transactional work, helping Singapore emerge as a leading hub for legal services.<sup>20</sup>
12. Beyond Singapore, the world economy has also rebounded from massive shocks. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis is a prime example. The scale of the crisis was immense and daunting, with the former Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, proclaiming in

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Rigg at p 345, Figure 1.

<sup>18</sup> Chew, Valerie, Singapore Infopedia, "Asian financial crisis (1997–1998)": <[https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1530\\_2009-06-09.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1530_2009-06-09.html)>.

<sup>19</sup> Gundy Cahyadi, Barbara Kursten, Dr Marc Weiss and Guang Yang, Global Urban Development – Singapore Metropolitan Economic Strategy Report, "Singapore's Economic Transformation" (June 2004) at p 8: <[globalurban.org/GUD%20Singapore%20MES%20Report.pdf](http://globalurban.org/GUD%20Singapore%20MES%20Report.pdf)>.

<sup>20</sup> Report of the Legal Services Review Committee (May 1999) at pp 24–31 and Jeffrey Chan, "Liberalisation of the Singapore Legal Sector" (10th General Assembly ALA Workshop Papers (Oct 2009)).

2009 that the crisis “was the worst financial crisis in global history, including the Great Depression”.<sup>21</sup> But even a crisis as major as that did not ultimately overcome us, and the world recovered over time.

13. The lesson to be drawn from the crises of the past few decades is that as formidable as it might seem when the crisis first comes upon us, there remains a future – usually brighter – that lies beyond the storm.
  
14. Indeed, the same observation may be made even within our legal profession. While it is true that my generation did not have to deal with a catastrophic event like COVID-19 in the early years of our practice, we have had to confront a profound array of changes over the course of the past few decades. These include the erosion of conveyancing revenue, the opening up of our legal services sector to international law firms, the proliferation of new areas of practice and specialisation, the dramatic increase in the sophistication of clients and their expectations of lawyers, and the revolutionary changes brought about by the explosion of data and electronic communications. Our key stakeholders – including the Judiciary, the Ministry of Law, the Attorney-General’s Chambers, the Academy of Law, and the Law Society – have been

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<sup>21</sup> Adam Tooze, Foreign Affairs, “The Forgotten History of the Financial Crisis: What the World Should Have Learned in 2008” (September/October 2018): <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-08-13/forgotten-history-financial-crisis#:~:text=%E2%80%9CSeptember%20and%20October%20of%202008,one%20year%20after%20the%20meltdown.>>.



instrumental in supporting and guiding the profession through these changes. Those who stayed the course and displayed resilience and optimism today stand tall, proud of all we have accomplished. And it is that same spirit we must bring with us as we look ahead to envisage an even brighter future.

#### **IV. Learning points from the pandemic**

15. In this light, let me highlight a few key lessons that I suggest we can draw from the present crisis.
  
16. First, the pandemic has underscored the immense contribution that technology can make to the administration of justice. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of COVID-19 for the courts and the legal profession will be the dissolution of long-held resistance in some quarters to the greater use of technology in legal processes, and a renewed appreciation of how technology can be harnessed to sustain and enhance access to justice. All around the world, court closures and the accompanying shift towards remote hearings have forced us to adopt changes that many in the profession had long been resistant to. As Professor Richard Susskind has observed, many judges and lawyers would have rejected the notion of non-physical courts and doubted the fairness and feasibility of remote hearings just a few months ago. But then the pandemic hit us, and courts had to choose between implementing

remote hearings, or simply adjourning all hearings for an indefinite period. That choice for many courts ultimately proved an easy one to make.<sup>22</sup> Today, it is safe to say that remote hearings have by and large proven to be a feasible, convenient and effective solution that has helped those courts that embraced it to maintain a good level of access to justice during the pandemic.

17. This leads to my second point. Beyond remote hearings, the profession must sustain the momentum of its search for new ways in which technology can contribute to the administration of justice, and in particular how technology can deliver the promise of the law to those who most require its aid but still struggle to obtain access to it.
18. That is especially important because the pandemic, like others before it, will likely have unequal effects on society. A study of five recent health crises, including SARS, H1N1, MERS, Ebola, and Zika showed that pandemics tend to increase income inequality because they result in unemployment, disproportionately affecting lower income groups.<sup>23</sup> The pandemic will likely also have a greater impact on small enterprises,

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Susskind, Financial Times, "Covid-19 shutdown shows virtual courts work better" (7 May 2020): <[ft.com/content/fb955fb0-8f79-11ea-bc44-db6756c871a](https://www.ft.com/content/fb955fb0-8f79-11ea-bc44-db6756c871a)>.

<sup>23</sup> Juzhong Zhuang, CNA, "Commentary: COVID-19 will worsen inequalities across Asia" (22 June 2020): <[channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/coronavirus-covid-19-economy-recession-inequality-msme-policy-12852180](https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/coronavirus-covid-19-economy-recession-inequality-msme-policy-12852180)>.

which tend to have smaller financial reserves and less spare capacity than larger firms, and are therefore more vulnerable to economic shocks.<sup>24</sup>

19. The pandemic has already had a disproportionate effect on access to justice. In May 2020, the Civil Justice Council in the UK conducted a rapid review of the impact of the changes brought about by COVID-19 on the operation of the civil justice system. Out of about 1,000 respondents to an online survey and a hundred participants in a remote consultation meeting, it was reported that the measures put in place due to the pandemic had reduced the availability and accessibility of legal advice, and this in turn had disproportionately affected those with low incomes.<sup>25</sup> In particular, legal advice providers funded by government legal aid faced difficulties transitioning to the remote provision of their services, and vulnerable persons such as the disabled and low income groups have struggled to use remote communication technology.
  
20. I have explained on a separate occasion that there is an important relationship between unequal access to justice and socio-economic

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Civil Justice Council, “Rapid Review: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Civil Justice System” at para 1.10 and 4.4 (4 June 2020): <<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FINAL-REPORT-CJC-4-June-2020.v2-accessible.pdf>>.

inequality,<sup>26</sup> which is one of the great challenges of our times and indeed one that the pandemic has brutally exposed in many societies. Unequal access to justice fosters asymmetry in the ability to vindicate rights. This perpetuates and worsens the socio-economic disequilibrium, which in turn reinforces disparities in the ability to access and afford essential legal services.<sup>27</sup> It is a vicious cycle that we, as members of the legal profession, can play an important role in ending. If this is a cause that you too believe in and are passionate about – as I believe many of you are – then I encourage you to drive the continuing search for technological and other solutions to enhance and equalise access to justice.

21. The third lesson concerns the need to rethink or relearn even fundamental lawyering skills such as advocacy, given the increased use of remote hearings. Litigation lawyers will have to learn to adapt to new forms of advocacy, and be proficient in arguing their case not just in person before a Judge, but also through remote hearing platforms. To do so effectively, advocates will have to familiarise themselves rapidly with the features of remote hearing platforms, and more importantly learn to navigate the constraints of such platforms. They will also have

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<sup>26</sup> Sundaresh Menon CJ, Negotiation and Conflict Management Group (NCMG) ADR Conference 2019, “Technology and the Changing Face of Justice” (14 November 2019) (“NCMG Lecture”): <[supremecourt.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ncmg---keynote-lecture.pdf](https://supremecourt.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ncmg---keynote-lecture.pdf)>.

<sup>27</sup> NCMG Lecture at para 9.

to learn the limitations of having to argue a case remotely with various others all dialing in from different locations.

22. I have already described how courts have turned to remote hearings as a solution to the physical closure of courtrooms. The same shift can be observed in the context of international arbitration. With the onset of the pandemic, arbitrations are now mostly being conducted remotely, with counsel and arbitrators dialling in from different locations in the world. In the long run, as arbitrators and counsel recognise the many benefits of remote hearings, not least of which is the time and money saved in not having to travel to a remote physical location,<sup>28</sup> such hearings in arbitration may become part of the new normal. Recent developments seem to bear this out. In May, three of the leading arbitration hearing centres in the world – Maxwell Chambers in Singapore, the International Dispute Resolution Centre in London, and the Arbitration Place in Toronto and Ottawa – joined forces to offer “global hybrid hearings” that will employ a combination of on-site and virtual methods of attendance to ensure that parties can participate in hearings from anywhere in the world.<sup>29</sup>

23. A fourth lesson that the pandemic has brought to the fore is the renewed

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<sup>28</sup> Jason Hambury, “Coronavirus ‘will speed up the adoption of virtual arbitrations’ (17 April 2020): <<https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/analysis/coronavirus-speed-adoption-virtual-arbitration>>.

<sup>29</sup> IACA, “What are Hybrid Hearings?”: <[iacaglobal.com/hybrid-hearings](http://iacaglobal.com/hybrid-hearings)>.

importance of ensuring that the client's needs are met in the most efficient manner possible. As a result of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, we can expect downward pressure on legal fees. Clients may be cash-strapped or simply cautious given the uncertain economic outlook, and therefore more likely to demand that their lawyers lower fees or find innovative ways to help them save costs. Lawyers able to devise innovative solutions to improve efficiency and reduce costs, whether through technology or other means, will be better able to offer competitive services and hence more likely to retain existing clients while landing new ones.<sup>30</sup> This is already an emerging trend. In May this year, Bloomberg Law surveyed around 500 law firms in the US. Eight out of ten respondents whose firms used legal technologies reported that their clients expected them to increase such use in order to enhance efficiency, and three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they would do so.<sup>31</sup>

24. I echo a point made by Mr Vijayendran when I say that as part of a new generation of lawyers especially proficient with technology, you have a

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<sup>30</sup> Edwin Lee & Daphne Sit, "The new normal from COVID-19 Pandemic: Embrace legal technology and innovation" (1 July 2020): <<https://www.legalbusinessonline.com/house-news/new-normal-covid-19-pandemic-embrace-legal-technology-and-innovation-brought-you-glt>>.

<sup>31</sup> Sara Lord, Bloomberg Law, "Analysis: The New Normal – Law Firms May Never be the Same" (8 May 2020): <<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/bloomberg-law-analysis/analysis-the-new-normal-law-firms-may-never-be-the-same>>.

tremendous opportunity to play a part in paving the way towards greater efficiency in the delivery of legal services. Some law firms in the US have reported that giving younger attorneys a leading role in their efforts at innovation has been critical in facilitating their pivot towards working remotely.<sup>32</sup> It has also been noted that younger lawyers are more likely than their more senior colleagues to request, learn and adopt technological tools that can reduce inefficiencies in legal practice.<sup>33</sup>

25. I therefore encourage you to actively consider how technology can improve efficiency in the delivery of legal services. If you succeed in doing so, you will be making a critical contribution to your firms, your clients, and even the wider profession. You are well-placed to offer fresh perspectives and creative ideas that may not occur to those of us accustomed to the old ways of doing things. So, be innovative in pursuing new ideas, collaborative in your approach to developing them, and bold in your efforts to actualise and publicise them. Discuss them with your colleagues and partners; contribute to ongoing discussions through articles and webinars; and participate in consultations with the Judiciary and the Law Society. Last year, when my colleagues on the Bench and I conducted a series of Conversations on the Future of the

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<sup>32</sup> Sharon Meit Abrahams, "What law firms need to learn from Millennials & COVID-19 (30 July 2020): <<https://www.legalexecutiveinstitute.com/practice-innovations-july2020-millennials-covid-19/>>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

Legal Profession, we received a trove of valuable feedback and ideas from young lawyers like yourselves that will, in time, help to shape the evolution of legal education and the transformation of court processes. Let that same expression of creativity and candour be your calling card in the profession.

26. Lastly, I encourage each one of you to commit to offering *pro bono* services, both as an essential part of your learning and development as well as a means by which you can give back to society and stay rooted to the reason you came to the law. Now more than ever, *pro bono* services will be critical in supporting access to justice for those who cannot afford it. No matter your seniority and area of practice, there will be ways for you to contribute and I urge you to be proactive in seeking those out. In the giving of your time, efforts, and skills to the most vulnerable members of society, you will not only find your lawyering skills sharpened, but also enjoy some of the most memorable and meaningful engagements in your professional lives. So do not let these opportunities pass you by.

## **V. Living up to the call**

27. I hope that what Mr Vijayendran and I have said today has provided you with some reasons to remain confident in, and look forward to, the beginning of your professional lives.



28. In your long career ahead, you will surely encounter other challenges and obstacles, some of which you might find overwhelming. But in both the best and the most difficult of times in your professional lives, I urge you to recall and hold fast to the reasons you chose to study law. For all the challenges and changes that face the profession today, its mission and ethos of public service remain every bit as important and relevant now as it had been before the pandemic. A few years ago, I suggested that those who choose the law because of the potential financial rewards are in the wrong profession and should either look at other options or be prepared for disappointment.<sup>34</sup> Let me reiterate that today. The study and practice of law is the preserve of those who are attracted to the ideals of the profession – justice, service, and doing right by others and by yourselves. If those ideals resonate with you and have inspired you to enter the profession, then let them continue to be your guide and inspiration.
29. I urge you also to keep an open mind regarding the work that finds its way to you. As I said earlier, the impact of the pandemic on the profession has not been even. There are areas of practice that have already experienced, and will continue to experience, a spike in

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<sup>34</sup> Sundaresh Menon CJ, Address by the Chief Justice at the Admission of Advocates & Solicitors on 26 August 2016 at paras 6 and 20:

<[https://www.supremecourt.gov.sg/Data/Editor/Documents/CJ%20Mass%20Call%20Speech%202016%20on%2026%20August%202016%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov.sg/Data/Editor/Documents/CJ%20Mass%20Call%20Speech%202016%20on%2026%20August%202016%20(Final).pdf)>.

demand. Be prepared to turn to these and other areas of work even if they might not have been part of your initial plans. Do not be reluctant or afraid to try your hand at unfamiliar work. You may well find that they suit your interests and talents, and open new opportunities for the development of your careers. And if they do not, you will nonetheless be receiving valuable experience and training of your minds which will put you in good stead when circumstances allow you to transition back to areas of work that better suit your interests.

## **VI. Conclusion**

30. Finally, on behalf of the profession, let me speak directly to your families and, in particular, your parents. As parents, you have given liberally and unconditionally of yourselves to bring your sons and daughters to this day, and this has truly been a labour of love. I have spoken today of the need for resilience, courage, and confidence in the face of adversity. In the journey that has been the education and upbringing of your children, these are values that you have richly displayed. Today's milestone is therefore as much their accomplishment as it is your own.
  
31. To the newest members of our profession, let me once again, on behalf of my colleagues on the Bench and of all of us already in this wonderful profession, warmly congratulate and welcome you to our ranks. I look forward to seeing all the great things you will accomplish in the years to

come.

32. The court is adjourned.

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