

STATEMENT BY MS. JO-PHIE TANG,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 83, ON
THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS,
SIXTH COMMITTEE, 11 OCTOBER 2019

of all countries to develop their own legal systems, including determining appropriate legal penalties, in accordance with their international law obligations. The manner in which the Secretary-General's report relied on the resolutions as confirmation of a trend in the application of the death penalty is therefore inaccurate, inappropriate and misleading.

3 Third, we regret that the Secretary-General's report has once again presented this issue in an imbalanced, selective and biased manner, by adopting the perspective of one group of States and ignoring the views of others. A similar issue arose during the 73rd session of the General Assembly, during which Singapore and a number of other Member States expressed our concerns with the manner in which the Secretary-General had reported on the issue of the death penalty. In that statement before this Committee, we had expressed the hope that future reports would accurately reflect the diversity of views among Member States on this issue, in an objective, neutral and non-partisan manner. We are therefore very disappointed in the Rule of Law Unit, which has chosen to disregard the views that were clearly expressed by a number of Member States in this Committee.

Mr. Chair,

4 Let us be clear. There is no international consensus against the use of the death penalty. This is evidenced by the fact that General Assembly resolution 73/175 was not adopted by consensus, but was instead put to a vote. International law does not prohibit the use of the death penalty. Every State has an inalienable and sovereign right to choose its political, economic, social, cultural, legal and criminal justice systems. Accordingly, the question of whether to retain, reintroduce or abolish the death penalty, and the types of crimes for which the death penalty is

applied, should be determined by each State, taking fully into account its history, its legal traditions and national circumstances. This is not an issue to be legislated by the United Nations or the Secretary-General. In this regard, Singapore fully expects that any future reports on this issue will be presented in an objective, neutral and non-partisan manner that avoids inaccurate, selective or biased characterisations of any General Assembly resolution.

Mr. Chair,

5 I turn now to the subtopic under consideration “Sharing best practices and ideas to promote the respect of States for international law” will make three brief points. First Singapore promotes respect for international law by improving accessibility to international dispute settlement mechanisms in-24.88 1(a)-4.4(u3(

for international law. This year, on 7 August, Singapore hosted the signing ceremony for the United Nations

