



## POSITION PAPER

Name of the Delegate : **ANUSREE V.B** , Adarsh Vidya Kendra

Country : Singapore

Committee : World Health Organisation (WHO)

AGENDA :

### *Improving access to immunisation and halting the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases*

Singapore is a wealthy city state in south-east Asia. They are famous for-being super clean, greenery amidst the city, fines and corporal punishment. Today, the Singapore economy is one of the most stable in the world, with no foreign debt, high government revenue and a consistently positive surplus.

They completed a joint external evaluation in collaboration with WHO and international experts in 2018. The aim of this exercise was to enhance core capacities to prevent and respond to public health emergencies, disease outbreaks, and other hazards including from chemical, radiation and natural disasters.

WHO has engaged closely with experts in Singapore to generate best practices on the surveillance, prevention and treatment of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Singapore's healthcare system provides access to quality healthcare through high government investments in infrastructure, subsidies, financing that has

resulted in high coverage of essential health services to support the COVID-19 response.

From Singapore's 60,000 cases, there have been only 30 deaths. In 2020, more people died of dengue. Health authorities now have administered more than 1.3 million doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines with nearly 400,000, or just under 10%, of Singapore's 5 million people having completed the full two-shot course. And most important, there are virtually no active cases of COVID-19 in the city-state, save for a trickle among travellers in quarantine.

Although the health and treatment issues of foreign migrant workers in dormitories continue to be the subject of ongoing debate among many scholars, it should be noted that the mortality rate in Singapore still remains very low compared to that of many other countries.

The political system in Singapore has been described as a competitive authoritarian state or an illiberal democracy. The government is trying to improve housing for workers. Decisions on testing and contact tracing were all made by the government in tandem with input from public health officials, and there has been no indication that political calculations were prioritized at the expense of health officials recommendations. However, there were some complaints by medical professionals on the ground that the instructions were often too mechanical and that there was no communication of the thought processes behind the containment decisions.

The government built several new living facilities for migrant workers after COVID infected their crowded dormitories. Over the longer term, the government plans to build new dorms for 100,000 workers, with a maximum of 10 workers per room. With the renewed national attention on migrant workers, the Government has pledged to raise living standards in dormitories when the battle against COVID-19 is over. The public agencies and leaders have engaged with citizens via WhatsApp, telegram, Facebook live, and YouTube to ensure that live updates reach further and enable citizens to remain updated on-the-go.

Singapore has been praised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a gold standard for crisis management. It also built up bed space for corona virus patients in cavernous exhibition halls and other temporary facilities to house those with mild or no symptoms.

In my opinion towards the halting of contagious diseases like Covid19 is not in the hands of government. It is up to the people to protect themselves from this

widespread of diseases. Nothing can be prevented unless the citizens of the country make an effort to stop it by following the rules and policies made by the government. Clearly- defined legal powers are needed to respond to outbreaks of contagious and serious diseases at national level.

***Overall, the manner in which the Singapore government has implemented these more stringent control measures and subsequent financial relief and the way it has delivered the information to its people has been exceedingly top-down, consistent with its history and the socio-political culture.***

