



MEDIA RELEASE

SECOND INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION NETWORK MEETING 2023

The Judiciary of Singapore is a Founding Member and the Secretariat to the International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network (JDRN), which convened on 22 and 23 May in New York City for its second meeting.

Established in May 2022, the mission of the JDRN is to advance the adoption of the Judicial Dispute Resolution (JDR) process in judicial systems around the world to enhance the administration and delivery of justice. This is achieved by promoting the early, amicable, cost-effective and fair resolution of court disputes without the need for a trial through proactive, judge-led management of cases and the employment of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) modalities. The JDRN comprises members from nine judiciaries, namely Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States.

2 The two-day meeting, hosted by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, was a platform for member judiciaries to share their common experiences; exchange ideas and expertise on leveraging the JDR process to break down barriers to justice; promote the delivery of fair, proportionate and timely justice; and achieve better outcomes for parties.

3 In his opening remarks, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said that recognising the importance of developing a user-centric court system is a central feature of the shift of the judiciary's perspective of its role from one that is strictly limited to adjudication, to a broader one that encompasses the aspiration to become an institution that excels in the administration of justice. One aspect of promoting user-centricity is making court processes easier to navigate, and providing more information and practical assistance to lay court users, who are a growing proportion of all our court systems. Another key aspect of this endeavour involves implementing mechanisms that are attuned to the interests of court users to help smoothen their pathways to justice, and this is where judge-led case management strategies and Court ADR modalities, which form the bedrock of the JDR process, can play an essential and vital role.

4 Chief Justice Menon cited mediation as an example where justice is made more accessible to lay litigants because it does not require issues to be framed in terms of legal arguments, and instead allows and encourages the parties to articulate their interests and concerns based on what matters to them. Early Neutral Evaluation, another ADR modality, allows the judge or evaluator to provide a realistic, objective early assessment of the merits of the parties' cases, which helps to manage the parties' expectations and helps the parties focus on the real issues in dispute. These modalities may also lay the groundwork for an amicable settlement that preserves the parties' relationship, in addition to offering considerable time and

cost savings. These benefits ultimately accrue to the users of these mechanisms, which are primarily the parties themselves.

5 Since the inaugural meeting in Singapore almost exactly a year ago, the founding members of the JDRN have actively reached out to fellow judiciaries to create broader awareness of the JDRN, and to expand the network with Members¹ and Observers². The Judiciary of Jamaica and the Judiciary of Rwanda have successfully applied to join the JDRN and were officially brought on board as Observers at this meeting in New York City.

6 In the past year, the JDRN has also developed the *Best Practice Guide for the Establishment, Implementation and Promotion of the Judicial Dispute Resolution Process*, which serves as the benchmark for the development and practice of the JDR process in jurisdictions which are keen to institutionalise it in their judicial systems. The JDRN is now working on developing Practice Guides on Early Neutral Evaluation and Mediation. These two key ADR modalities have been widely and successfully employed in judicial systems such as the State Courts of Singapore, where about 30 per cent of the civil cases filed fall under the rubric of the JDR process, with more than 80 per cent of cases settled without trial, saving legal costs, time and judicial resources.

7 Chief Justice Menon said: “These Guides not only draw on the collective wisdom of all contributors to provide roadmaps for the future, but they also reaffirm our shared commitment to delivering fair, proportionate and practical justice to the users of our justice systems.”

8 A photo of the Singapore delegation at the JDRN meeting is provided below. A Fact Sheet on the JDRN is also provided at Annex A.

¹ A judiciary which has experience in the JDR process and has integrated it into its judicial process as a key component of case management may apply for membership of the JDRN.

² Judiciaries which show a keen interest in adopting the JDR process or are in the early stages of adopting the JDR process, may apply to join as an Observer.

Enclosed:



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and the Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong with the Singapore delegation at the JDRN meeting in New York City (centre left and right)

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SG Courts

The Singapore Courts - comprising the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts - is one of the three constitutional pillars of government in Singapore. Known collectively as **SG Courts**, we are integrated and coordinated to serve as one judiciary. As an organ of state, the judiciary's function is to independently administer justice. Headed by the Chief Justice, we are a forward-looking, innovative and trusted judiciary. Built on judicial professionalism and transparency, we maintain the highest standards of integrity in safeguarding our community. We pledge to ensure equal and continuous access to justice, and we are committed to deliver justice that is fair and impartial.



Annex A - About the International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network

The International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network (JDRN) comprises judiciaries from across the common law and civil law traditions to advance the adoption of the Judicial Dispute Resolution (JDR) process in judicial systems around the world to enhance the administration and delivery of justice by promoting the early, amicable, cost-effective and fair resolution of court disputes without the need for a trial through pro-active, judge-led management of cases, twinned with the employment of Court Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) modalities.

The JDRN is a non-binding and voluntary group of like-minded judiciaries which collectively seek to pursue the mission, objectives and goals of the Network.

The founding members of the JDRN

1. Federal Court of Australia
2. Judiciary of Canada
 - a. Court of Appeal of Quebec
 - b. Ontario Superior Court of Justice
3. The Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China
4. Judiciary of Germany
 - a. Higher Regional Court/Court of Appeal (Kammergericht) Berlin
 - b. Berlin Regional Court
5. Federal Court of Malaysia
6. Supreme Court of the Philippines
7. Judiciary of Singapore
8. Judiciary of England and Wales, United Kingdom
9. United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

The objectives of establishing the JDRN

1. Provide a platform for member judiciaries of the JDRN and other interested judiciaries to share experiences and exchange ideas and expertise on leveraging the JDR process to manage their cases effectively and achieve better outcomes for litigants.
2. Develop and promote a set of standards and best practices to serve as the benchmark for the development and practice of the JDR process in jurisdictions which are keen to institutionalise it in their judicial systems.
3. Support efforts in judicial systems which are interested in adopting the JDR process by providing access to knowhow and resources for capacity building and the development of judicial competencies in the JDR process.

The JDR Process

The JDR process refers to the proactive, judge-led management of cases, twinned with the use of a range of Court ADR modalities to achieve the resolution of court disputes in full or in part so that judicial time is saved.

Objectives of the JDR Process

1. An early, amicable resolution of the court dispute;
2. An amicable settlement that aids in the preservation of commercial or personal relationships;
3. A cost-effective resolution of the court dispute;
4. An enforceable outcome for parties;
5. Promotes the effective use and deployment of scarce judicial resources; and
6. Effective management of judicial caseload.

Key Features of the JDR Process

1. Early and ongoing application of the JDR process during the judicial proceedings;
2. The integral nature of the JDR process;
3. Cost containment and management;
4. Timeliness; and
5. Creative solutions and options.

Court ADR Modalities employed during the JDR Process

1. Early Neutral Evaluation;
2. Mediation;
3. Judge-facilitated negotiations; and
4. Appointment of assessors/experts/referees to help determine complex factual issues.

The “Best Practice Guide for the Establishment, Implementation and Promotion of the JDR process”



JDRN best practice
guide-appd_1jan23.

Link: www.int-jdrn.org/resources/permalink/