

**Intervention on “Priority Issue 3: Effective Parliament,
Vibrant Democracy” at the Eight G20 Parliamentary
Speakers’ Summit in Jakarta on 6 October 2022**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Good afternoon. I first want to express my appreciation to Speaker Puan Maharani and the Indonesian Parliament for the excellent arrangements and hospitality. I would also like to thank you for the invitation to join as a guest.

2. Today, I would like to focus on and share how we, in Singapore, try to be more inclusive and representative in our Parliament¹, to reflect our multiracial society, to ensure representation by opposition parties and to include the views of different and non-partisan sectors of our society.

¹ The 14th Parliament currently has 103 MPs (92 elected MPs, 2 NCMPs and 9 NMPs). There are 83 PAP MPs and 11 opposition MPs (9 WP MPs and 2 PSP MPs). There are 30 women MPs (comprising 29% of all MPs), 9 of which are office holders, 3 opposition MPs and 3 NMPs.

Group Representation Constituencies

3. First, the Group Representation Constituencies², or the GRC was introduced in 1988. The GRC is a type of electoral division or constituency in Singapore that is represented by a team of 3 – 6 multiracial candidates where at least one of the candidates in a team belongs to a minority racial community.

4. In the current term of Singapore's Parliament, racial minority MPs account for about 28% of the total number of MPs³.

Non-Constituency Member of Parliament

5. Second, the Non-Constituency Member of Parliament scheme, or NCMP scheme which was introduced in 1984. This Scheme ensures that there would always be a minimum number of opposition members represented in Parliament.

² For the 2020 general election, there were 17 GRCs (each comprising 4 – 5 MPs) and 14 SMCs.

³ The 14th Parliament comprises 74 Chinese MPs, 15 Malay MPs, and 14 MPs who are part of the Indian, Eurasian and other minority groups. Excluding NMPs, there are 68 Chinese MPs, 13 Malay MPs and 13 MPs who are part of the Indian, Eurasian and other minority groups.

6. Under the Scheme, the losing opposition candidates⁴ with the highest percentage of votes secured during a General Election, can be offered seats in Parliament if the number of elected opposition candidates falls short of 12 Members⁵.

7. NCMPs have equal speaking and voting rights as elected MPs.

Nominated Member of Parliament

8. Third, the Nominated Member of Parliament scheme, or the NMP scheme which was introduced in 1990. NMPs are independent and non-partisan. Their views in debates do not reflect party lines and can add greater depth and breadth to the discussions.

⁴ The opposition candidate must have obtained not less than 15% of the total number of votes in his constituency.

⁵ There are currently 11 opposition MPs (9 elected MPs from WP and 2 NCMPs from PSP). Ms Raeesah Khan resigned on 30 Nov 2021.

9. Singapore's Constitution provides for up to nine NMPs who have rendered distinguished public service to be appointed⁶.

10. NMPs⁷ can vote on all matters before Parliament except Supply Bills, Money Bills, Constitutional amendments and motions of no confidence in the Government.

Conclusion

11. Ensuring inclusivity and representation in Parliament is only a first step. There must also be complementary and supporting citizen engagement efforts to reach the ground directly.

Thank you.

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⁶ An NMP is appointed by the President for a term of two and a half years on the recommendation of a Special Select Committee chaired by the Speaker of Parliament.

⁷ NMPs have made contributions to the debates in Parliament and Singapore's political landscape. A Private Member's Bill was initiated by one of our NMPs previously and this Bill was eventually passed by Parliament and became public law.