

PRESS RELEASE

REPORT OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

1. The Estimates Committee presented its report to Parliament on 23 August 2021. The Estimates Committee had considered the Budgets for the Financial Years (FY) 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 and enquired into certain matters, including monitoring of COVID-19 support schemes and measures taken to address Singapore's challenging fiscal position. The Committee also made enquiries on the Singapore Green Plan 2030 and measures taken to encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyle by Singaporeans to manage the fiscal burden of healthcare.
2. In the course of its enquiry, the Committee held five meetings and considered two memoranda from MOF.
3. The [Report](#) of the Estimates Committee [Parl. 4 of 2021] and an Executive Summary on the Report are attached in this Press Release.
4. Mr Ang Wei Neng, the Chairman of the Committee said, "With the significant amount of public funds set aside to help Singaporeans cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee expressed the need for robust monitoring mechanisms, transparency and accountability of the various support schemes. While we are concerned about the erroneous Job Support Scheme payments, we noted the circumstances leading to the error payments and that the Government has been upfront and transparent in the error made. The Committee urged the Government to provide periodic updates, where possible, on the status of the rectification progress.

With regard to Singapore's challenging fiscal position and taking the view that encouraging Singaporeans to adopt healthy lifestyles would be part of the strategy to manage rising healthcare expenditures, the Committee encouraged the Government to continue exploring new initiatives to nudge Singaporeans to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Turning to the Green Plan 2030 announced in Budget 2021, the Committee proposed having the goals and the progress made, together with the guiding plans to reach those goals, published in an engaging way with suggestions on how and what Singaporeans could do to achieve those goals. Such outreach efforts could also encourage more Singaporeans to be aware of the Green Plan 2030 and take ownership by doing their part in the green movement."

24 August 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

For general queries, please contact:
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Executive Summary

Background

1 The Select Committee was appointed pursuant to Standing Order No 100 (3) to examine any of the Estimates, to report what economies consistent with the policy implied in the Estimates might be effected, and, subject to the provisions of the law, to suggest the form in which the Estimates might be presented.

Overview

2 Singapore had a series of unprecedented Budgets to help people and businesses cope with the impact and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Estimates Committee decided to look at these Budgets, together with the regular annual Budgets, which launched a number COVID-19 support schemes to align with the three main thrusts of the Government's response to the pandemic, namely (i) to protect lives, (ii) to protect livelihoods and (iii) to strengthen social support. In carrying out this exercise, the Committee wanted to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these support schemes. MOF shared with the Committee, amongst other things, the effectiveness of the support schemes and the various monitoring efforts, which included lessons learnt from the erroneous JSS payments. As the ever-evolving pandemic required Ministries and agencies to react swiftly within tight timelines, the Committee urged the Government to look into ensuring that sufficient manpower and resources were deployed to handle the implementation and monitoring of the COVID-19 support schemes. More observations and recommendations are in paragraphs 18, 34 to 36 and 46 to 48 of the Report.

3 Noting that a significant amount was drawn from the past reserves, it is expected that Singapore would face a challenging fiscal position for a number of years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy. The Committee wanted to know the measures taken by the Government to address Singapore's challenging fiscal position. MOF shared with the Committee how the Government has been managing baseline spending, strengthening accountability and the efforts to monitor performance including their projections for revenue and expenditures. The Committee urged MOF to constantly review the relevancy of schemes across the Government with steps to sunseting or discontinue schemes that had become irrelevant. This would help in some way to ensure that Government expenditures would

continue to remain sustainable in the future. The Committee's observations and recommendations can be found in paragraphs 67 and 95 to 96 of the Report.

4 Drawing on the knowledge that Government spending on health and aged care would continue to rise, the Committee decided to investigate how the Government is encouraging Singaporeans to take ownership of their own health and wellness to help manage the fiscal burden of healthcare. In making this inquiry, the Committee hoped to find out more about other efforts by the Government to manage the rising healthcare expenditure. It was shared with the Committee that the Government had implemented programmes to create a supportive environment for all Singaporeans to make healthier choices and take ownership of their own health. The Committee urged the Government to appoint a lead Ministry to coordinate and lead the WOG efforts on managing the fiscal burden of healthcare. The Committee's observations and recommendations are found in paragraphs 104 to 106 of the Report.

5 With the Singapore Green Plan announced in Budget 2021 and the impact of climate change on all aspect of our daily lives, the Committee decided to make its investigation into this topic. In carrying out this exercise, the Committee noted the whole-of-nation efforts taken to implement the Green Plan and the monitoring efforts to achieve the targets. The Committee urged MOF to work with the coordinating Ministry to minimise duplication and wastage in implementing the Green Plan. More observations and recommendations are in paragraph 115 of the Report.
