

Key Highlights From AG Lucien Wong's Opening Of The Legal Year 2025 Speech



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THE LEGAL SERVICE'S CROSS-BORDER WORK AND OUR COMMITMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAW

We live in a time when it is more important than ever that we hold firm to our conviction in the Rule of Law, both domestically and internationally. We do this because we believe that adhering to a rules-based order is not only just, it leads to substantively better outcomes.

Lucien Wong
Attorney-General and President of the Legal Service Commission

1. How the Legal Service Approaches Work with International Dimensions

In an increasingly interconnected world, AGC and the broader Legal Service have seen our work evolve to include significant international elements. This reflects the need for Singapore to collaborate with other countries in a rules-based international order to effectively navigate complex global challenges.

AGC's commitment to the international Rule of Law means that we approach all work with international dimensions by:



EXAMPLES

► Climate Change

Argued and advanced Singapore's positions in advisory proceedings before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (2023) and the International Court of Justice (2024) on matters relating to States' climate change obligations.

Attended COP29 as legal advisors to the Singapore delegation and played "honest broker" role to forge consensus during international climate change negotiations.

Supported Singapore's international collaborations on carbon markets pursuant to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement — by advising on the necessary bilateral memoranda of understanding and Implementation Agreements, as well as the legal mechanisms for domestic implementation.

► Digital Economy

Supported the negotiation of Digital Economy agreements, including the European Union - Singapore Digital Trade Agreement.

Contributed to the development of international standards by helping to draft the Model AI Governance Framework for Generative AI.

► Tackling Transnational and Financial Crime

Ready to provide assistance to our international counterparts amid increase in new mutual legal assistance and extradition requests (increase of more than 35% in 2024, compared with 2023).

Reviewed and updated our laws to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing, including by supporting the passage of the following Acts:

- Anti-Money Laundering and Other Matters Act 2024
- Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) and Other Matters Act 2024
- Corporate Service Providers Act 2024
- Prevention of Proliferation Financing and Other Matters Act 2024

Fully committed to Financial Action Task Force standards. Zero-tolerance for money laundering.

Significant Case: Criminal prosecutions initiated following a 2023 island-wide raid. 27 suspects involved and S\$2.79 billion assets surrendered to the State so far.

- 10 were arrested in Singapore, prosecuted, and convicted of money laundering.
- S\$944 million in assets were surrendered.
- Of the remaining 17 suspects overseas, 15 have surrendered around S\$1.85 billion of assets.
- Remaining two suspects' assets of S\$144.9 million remain seized or prohibited from disposal.

2. Building and Maintaining International Relationships

AGC officers participated in various international forums and conferences to engage our counterparts and foster stronger relationships.

► Key Engagements in 2024

Inaugural G20 Summit of Heads of Prosecution Services
Shared Singapore's experience on combating transnational organised crime through international cooperation.

41st Cambridge International Symposium on Economic Crime
Delivered a keynote address on Singapore's strategies to combat money laundering.

29th International Association of Prosecutors ("IAP") Annual Conference and General Meeting
Engaged key counterparts and exchanged experiences on prosecution.

Organised by AGC:

10th Tri-AGC Meeting
Facilitated knowledge sharing between officers from the Attorney-General's Chambers of Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore.

Inaugural Forum of Chief Legal Advisors
Hosted Chief Legal Advisors from around the world to discuss topics on international dispute settlement.

14th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference
Hosted Attorneys-General and Prosecutors-General from China and ASEAN countries, reaffirming commitment to cooperate in the combat of transnational financial crimes.

► Upcoming International Conferences to be Hosted by AGC

► AGC will be organising and hosting the 30th IAP Annual Conference and General Meeting in September 2025.

► AGC is planning for the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel Conference in 2026, a biennial event for the Commonwealth's legislative drafting community to discuss the latest drafting issues.

3. Maintaining Quality at International Standards

Tapping on global legal experts: prominent regulators, specialised legal practitioners, King's Counsel and eminent academics are regularly engaged to train and have dialogues with Legal Service Officers.

Keeping up with the latest in legal technology: ongoing evaluation of AI tools and regular engagement of overseas counterparts on technological developments that can be implemented in AGC's work.



Commitment to Training, Development and Growth

► AGC and the Legal Service are committed to support the recommendations of the Working Group for the Reform of Legal Education, in particular the recommendation to enhance the exposure of law students to public sector legal work.

► AGC supports staff upskilling and upgrading: AGC supported two legal executives in their LLB studies — both have completed their studies and were appointed as Legal Service Officers in 2024.