It gives me great pleasure to present for the very first time, a *One Judiciary* annual report boxed set, which showcases the work of the Supreme Court, the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts sharing a common mission to superintend the administration of justice and make justice accessible to all. Themed “Upholding Our Values”, the reports detail the work of the three Courts and their initiatives that are underpinned by the values of fairness, accessibility, independence, integrity and impartiality.

The judiciary will have to respond to an increasingly challenging global and economic climate. We must enhance the quality of our work even as we look to reduce the cost of litigating by simplifying processes where possible. On this front, we have introduced significant changes to our civil and criminal litigation processes. At the Family Justice Courts, a child maintenance matrix, based on actuarial data is also being devised to guide the resolution of cases involving children so that such disputes can be settled quickly and less acrimoniously.

On the international front, we are widening and strengthening our judicial networks. An International Advisory Council which I chair and comprising family judges from various jurisdictions provides the Family Justice Courts with many useful and diverse perspectives that will help us address present and future challenges.

I am also delighted by the success of the first judicial insolvency network conference involving judges from 10 jurisdictions which we hosted in October 2016. The conference resulted in the promulgation of guidelines for court-to-court communication and cooperation protocols. Following the meeting, Singapore and the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware formally implemented the guidelines, with other jurisdictions expected to similarly adopt the guidelines.

Technological advancements will require the legal sector to rethink entire areas of practice. While this will likely prove to be disruptive, we should embrace and welcome the change as technology can potentially improve processes, resulting in greater effectiveness at a lower cost for society. The Courts of the Future Taskforce will make recommendations to get our Courts “future-ready” while the Singapore Academy of Law has launched the Legal Technology Vision to help the legal sector adopt and implement technological changes.
The Supreme Court and State Courts, together with NTU SPIRIT Centre, have embarked on the development of an Intelligent Case Retrieval System. The aim is to have a more effective retrieval of key legal documents in decided cases for road traffic accidents and personal injury matters. Besides making it easier and quicker for legal research to be performed, it will add to the quality of decision making and judgment writing for judges. The technology developed through this platform may even perform other legal functions, such as Case Summarisation and Logic Reasoning. This will lead the way to a more sophisticated legal research, advisory and decision support system in the future.

The judiciary is on the cusp of change and these are exciting times. As we implement changes, we must continue to put the interest of Singaporeans first and ensure that justice is within their reach. I am confident that my colleagues on the Supreme Court Bench as well as the judicial officers and administrators from the State Courts and Family Justice Courts will continue to work hard in ensuring effective access to justice for all. I am deeply grateful for their dedication and commitment to this extremely meaningful cause.

I hope this One Judiciary Annual Report will give you a glimpse into the work of the Courts in Singapore. Together, we seek to administer a world class judiciary and make justice accessible for all Singaporeans.

SUNDARESH MENON
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Singapore