



RULE OF LAW SOLUTIONS FOR A PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE: IDLO's STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

IDLO Partnership Forum 2024

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy and Online

26 November 2024 | 2:00 to 3:30 PM CET

SPEAKER BIO

Hon. Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh

Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines



Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh earned her *Juris Doctor* degree from the Ateneo de Manila University School of Law with Second Honors distinction. She pursued further studies at the Washington College of Law of the American University in Washington, D.C., USA for a Master of Laws in International Legal Studies. She earlier obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English major in Imaginative Writing, *cum laude*, from the University of the Philippines.

A career jurist who served in all levels of the judicial hierarchy, Justice Singh practiced law for 10 years before joining the Judiciary in October 2002 as the Presiding Judge of Branch 31 of the Metropolitan Trial Court of Quezon City. She was appointed Executive Judge of the MeTC-Quezon City thereafter and served for two terms in that capacity. Simultaneously, Justice Singh was selected and sat as the Representative of all First Level Courts in

the country on the Board of Trustees of the Philippine Judicial Academy. She served on the PhilJA BOT until her promotion to the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City as Presiding Judge of Branch 85 in June of 2007. Justice Singh was bestowed the Don Antonio Madrigal Award as Most Outstanding First Level Court Judge of 2007 by the Society for Judicial Excellence of the Supreme Court.

From August 2009 to June 2010, Justice Singh was a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow on Court Management and Judicial Education of the US Department of State in the USA and in the course of such Fellowship, she worked with the World Bank's Institutional Reform Sector, specifically on judicial reform projects in Europe and Central Asia. During the same year, Justice Singh also became the first Philippine Judicial Fellow at the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, D.C., the educational arm of the US Supreme Court and the counterpart of the PhilJA.

On March 14, 2014, Justice Singh was appointed as an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals. She served as the Chairperson of the Court's Committee on Continuing Judicial Education, and as a Member of the Court's Committee on Rules, Committee on Gender and Development, and an Editor of the Court of Appeals Journal.

While serving as a Judge and, thereafter, as an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals, Justice Singh served on several committees of the Supreme Court, including the Technical Working Group that drafted the Rule on Small Claims and its templates; the Technical Working Group on the Updating of the Philippine Benchbook of Forms for Trial Court Judges; the Technical Working Group on the Revision of the Rules Governing Notaries Public.

In 2017, Justice Singh had the privilege of drafting Chapter 6 on the Swift and Fair Administration of Justice of the Philippine Development Plan, the economic blueprint of the country for 2017-2040. In this Chapter, Justice Singh pushed for a sector approach for the delivery of justice, a monumental shift from the traditional individual agency approach.

Justice Singh was the Chairperson of the Civil Law Department of the Philippine Judicial Academy, and sat in its Sub-Committee for Curriculum Review. She was likewise a member of the faculty of a number of law schools in the country, including the Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines College of Law, the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Civil Law, the Lyceum of the Philippines University College of Law, the Centro Escolar University School of Law and Jurisprudence, the De La Salle University College of Law, and the Manuel L. Quezon University College of Law.

In 2021, Justice Singh was appointed as the Expert Resource Person of the Legal Education Board Curriculum Revision Committee, in the crafting of the Revised Model Curriculum for legal education. Justice Singh is a published author. In 2021, she co-authored a best-selling pre-week reviewer on Remedial Law for bar examinees. She presented a paper on Court and Case Management upon the invitation of the International Organization for Judicial Training, the global network of judicial training institutions. She has also written a Toolkit for Philippine Trial Judges, as well as a working paper on Enforcement of Ethical Standards. She has published a number of articles in the Court of Appeals Journal and the Ateneo Law Journal, including the articles entitled "Rule 42: Writing *Finis* to a 20-Year Redundancy" and "The Hearsay Rule: A Paradigm Shift."

Justice Singh was also an active lecturer on the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) circuit for lawyers prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court.

In 2021, Justice Singh delivered the 17th Metrobank Foundation Professorial Chair lecture entitled "Wielding the Sword: The Role of Judicial Education in the Administration of Justice." The Metrobank Professorial Chair is a distinguished lecture series for outstanding members of the judiciary, which seeks to promote judicial excellence through the delivery of timely and

comprehensive discourses. Justice Singh is the first and only female chairholder in the Program's history.

On 18 May 2022, Justice Singh took her oath before Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo as the 194th Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

Currently, Justice Singh is the Co-Chairperson of the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary, and the Planning Committee of Chapter 13.2 of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, on the Enhanced Administration of Justice. She is also the Chairperson of the following Sub-Committees and Technical Working Groups: the Justice Sector Coordinating Council Technical Working Group on Processes and Capacity Building, the Sub-Committee the Review of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary; the Sub-Committee for the Review of the Code of Conduct for Court Personnel; the Technical Working Group to Compile, Classify, and Index All Pertinent Rules, Guidelines and Issuances on Pleading, Practice and Procedure; the Technical Working Group on Disposal of Unserviceable Properties; the Technical Working Group to Study Proposals Regarding the Adoption of Filtering Mechanisms to be Required Prior to Resort to Court Action; the Technical Working Group Under the Sub-Committee for the Revision of the Rules of Civil Procedure to Study and Revise the Book of Forms; and the Technical Working Group on Feminism in Philippine Jurisprudence.

Justice Singh is the Vice Chairperson of the Committee for the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices Working Group on the Conduct of Videoconferencing; the Supreme Court Governing Council for Mental Health; the Sub-Committee for the Revision of the Code of Professional Responsibility; the Oversight Committee for the Implementation of Rule 138-A or the Revised Law Student Practice Rule; the Technical Working Group for Forms Under the Sub-Committee for the Revision of the Rules of Criminal Procedure; and the Technical Working Group That Will Study The Reports Entitled "*Preparing and Implementing the Digital Information System Access Plan*" and "*Organizational Assessment and Quasi-Diagnostic Process Mapping*" and Propose Recommendations on Their Key Results. Justice Singh is also a Co-Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Sustainability and Environmental Concerns.

Justice Singh is also a Member of the Technical Working Group on Electronic Notarization; the Committee on the Revision of the Rule of Summary Procedure and Small Claims Cases; the Sub-Committee on the Revision of the Rules of Criminal Procedure; and the Philippine Statistical Development Program Steering Committee.

Justice Singh is the representative of the Philippine Judiciary in the Panel of Referees of the Journal of the Malaysian Judiciary.

In April 2023, Justice Singh was invited to sit as a member of the Advisory Working Group of the United Nations Development Programme – Judicial Integrity Network in ASEAN.

In May 2023, Justice Singh was designated as the Focal Person for the Supreme Court in the Philippine Open Government Partnership Initiative.

On May 11, 2023, after receiving the highest number of votes, Justice Singh was elected as a Director for the Asia Pacific Region of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ). The IAWJ is an organization composed of 6,500 visionary women judges in more than 100 countries, whose objective is to empower women judges to uproot gender bias, end discriminatory laws, advance gender-responsive courts, and promote human rights for all.

In July 2023, Justice Singh was elected to the Governing Council of the Global Judicial Institute of the Environment in New York City, where she also participated in the drafting of the Model Forest Act Initiative in New York City.

Born on June 25, 1966, Justice Singh, a single parent, has four children – Maria Clara Francesca, Jude Anthony, Joseph Gerard, and Joshua John. She is the daughter of Harry Francisco M. Singh and Atty. Clara Dizon Dumandan-Singh.