

SINGAPORE'S VIEWS ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT EFFORTS PURSUANT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 72/38

Significant advances in science and technology have had profound implications on our societies. On one hand, these advances have facilitated an increase in quality of life and have immense potential to contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, while the advances could accelerate human progress, greater reliance on such technologies introduces new vulnerabilities and threats, some of which could have grave impact on international peace and security. Singapore appreciates the opportunity to submit views on “current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts”. Singapore’s submission will focus on cybersecurity and outer space.

Information and Communications Technologies

As a small and highly networked state, Singapore strongly believes in the need for a rules-based cyberspace underpinned by international law that could enable economic progress and better living standards both regionally and internationally. Singapore also recognises that norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace need to be complemented with targeted cybersecurity capacity building and confidence building measures, so that countries are able to meet their obligations under those norms. Singapore has been an active participant in key international and regional platforms facilitating discussions on cyber norms, capacity building and confidence building measures.

Singapore has participated in the Global Forum for Cyber Expertise, the Global Commission on the Stability in Cyberspace and the Global Conference on Cyberspace. Singapore also hosted a Forum of Small States (FOSS) Dialogue on “Small States and Cybersecurity” and organised two side-events at the United Nations that focused on developments on cyber norms discussions at the international levels, and discussed practical ways to move forward.

Over the past two years, Singapore has worked to raise awareness in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through workshops under the auspices of Singapore’s ASEAN Cyber Capacity Programme (ACCP), focusing on norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, how international law applies to cyberspace, strategy and legislation development, critical information infrastructure protection and incident response. Singapore has also convened the ASEAN Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Incident Drill (ACID) for the past 13 years.

Singapore hosted the 2nd Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) in September 2017, which included the 2nd ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC). During the 2nd AMCC, ASEAN Ministers recognised the need to move forward on the adoption of voluntary norms of behaviour in ASEAN to guide the responsible use of ICT, taking reference from the norms recommended in the Report of the 2015 United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of ICT in the Context of International Security. Most recently, at the 32nd ASEAN Summit in Singapore in April 2018, ASEAN Leaders adopted a Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, which tasks relevant Ministers to make concrete progress and recommendations on the issue of practical, voluntary norms of State behaviour in cyberspace and feasible options for coordinating ASEAN cybersecurity efforts. Singapore will continue to build on these efforts, and will host the 3rd SICW from 18 to 20 September 2018, with the theme “Forging a Trusted and Open Cyberspace”.

Outer Space

Outer space has become a domain relevant to a broad spectrum of human activities, including navigation, commerce and communications. Singapore firmly believes that outer space should remain a peaceful global commons, and is committed to the endeavour of preventing an arms race in outer space. The international community must work together and build on international norms in space, taking into account advancements in space technology and applications since the time most existing treaties on outer space were drafted.

Singapore supports building on the transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities contained in the consensus Report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189). Singapore supported the establishment of a GGE to make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. The GGE’s mandate should be broad to consider all existing discussions on the peaceful uses of outer space. The GGE should work in an open and inclusive manner, and take into account the differing views of all countries when making its recommendations. Singapore looks forward to the outcome of the GGE’s discussions.