

## **Singapore's Views on the Points of Contact Directory at the United Nations**

Singapore welcomes the consensus endorsement of the Open-ended Working Group's (OEWG) Annual Progress Report by the UN General Assembly (UNGA)'s First Committee, including the OEWG's decision to establish a global, inter-governmental Points-of-Contact (POCs) directory. Such a global POCs directory is essential in facilitating coordination and communication between Member States, especially in times of crisis. In the event of ICT incidents, this could function as a means to de-escalate tensions, and prevent misunderstandings and misperceptions arising from ICT incidents. As such, the global POCs directory at the UN is a useful and important tool to build mutual trust and confidence in the use of ICTs by States and maintaining international peace and security.

### **Views on Establishing and Implementing the Global POCs Directory at the UN**

The implementation of the global POCs directory at the UN should be taken by a formal decision by the First Committee via the endorsement of a recommendation(s) of the OEWG. Given its institutional linkage with the OEWG and its trusted role within the UN community, the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) would be most suited to set up and administer the global POCs directory at the UN.

As a start, the directory could be populated with entries in the following categories: (a) Diplomatic POCs; and (b) Operational and technical POCs. A core function of a global POCs directory at the UN could be the reporting of incidents and responses as well as communication in the event of crisis, which would bolster existing international and regional CERT-CERT POC arrangements for the operational and technical exchange of cyber threat and cyber attack-related information. States would also have the option of sharing relevant information and lessons learned on a voluntary basis through trusted communication channels and thereby contribute to building capacities to prevent cyber incidents in other countries or to manage crises effectively. Such additional CBMs would need to be subject to further focused discussions within the OEWG.

In times of non-crisis, the global POCs directory at the UN would foster communication among participating States, e.g. by serving as a resource for Member States to engage in with each other, e.g. peer-to-peer exchange or by sharing information on events related to cybersecurity. Such interaction would equally increase trust and reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

In terms of communication, it should take place in any of the official UN languages. Additionally, the POC directory should also allow for States to indicate each POC's preferred UN language for carrying out communication.

#### *Proposed required details for POCs*

It would be preferred if the global POCs directory could be hosted online to allow effective maintenance of the directory. Information of the national POCs should contain: (a) name; (b) name of the office/unit/department/agency in charge of the POC; (c) professional email of the contact person; (d) general email of the office/unit/department/agency in charge of the POC; (e) address; (f) telephone number; (g) typology (i.e. diplomatic, operational and technical etc.); and (h) PGP key/secure means in conveying sensitive information.

#### *Proposed role and responsibilities of the Secretariat*

The Secretariat should have oversight on the communication, maintenance of the global POCs directory and table-top exercises. The Secretariat should also hold cyber exercises and trainings, and coordinate capacity-building efforts relating to the implementation and operationalisation of POCs

and the POC directory. To ensure that the global POCs directory remain updated, the Secretariat should send a scheduled reminder to all Member States to update their POC details, as appropriate. Member States should also endeavour to update the Secretariat as soon as possible when there are changes to the POCs. It would also be more efficient for Member States to be able to make these changes on an online global POCs directory. In this regard, the Secretariat should have a dedicated budget to effectively carry out the tasks related to managing the global POCs directory, including the establishment and management of the online directory.

#### Singapore's Experience with POCs Directory

Singapore has provided a POC to the directory of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies. The existing operational and technical POCs directory is useful for real time information sharing amongst ARF Member States. The POCs directory is also a useful CBMs tool as it allows counterparts to interact with each other during table-top exercises. We note, however, from our experience with the POCs directory at the ARF and discussions with non-ARF counterparts, that a challenge remains in ensuring that the POCs directory is updated. To address this, Singapore has annually hosted the ASEAN CERT Incident Drill, a table-top exercise, since 2006. Such an exercise is useful in ensuring the POCs directory is updated as it is used to verify if the operational and technical POCs are still in post.