

The Republic of Singapore

Positions for the General Assembly Plenary

I. Examining the Economic and Environmental Effects of Agricultural Practices on Member States

Developing member states are increasing their purchasing power, are urbanizing, and are using more land and water resources than ever before. Growth prospects and the expected evolution of per capita income will stress our current food economy and will ultimately undermine the security of our world economy. In accordance with Millennium Goal Seven: to “integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resource,” the Republic of Singapore acknowledges the importance of safe, effective agricultural practices in promoting a healthy environment, sustainable development, and poverty reduction.

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has reported that global food production needs to increase by half by 2030 to meet this growing demand. The international community cannot address this issue adequately without sufficient monitoring and analysis mechanisms, stability in developing policies, and environmental ignorance in economic policy.

As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) Food Security Information System, Singapore is committed to solidifying regional food security analysis. Singapore approves of the efforts of UN programs like the World Food Program (WFP), which have specialized in analyzing food security. The WFP’s assessment method or VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping) strengthens food security analysis by providing information on food and commodity prices. The Program also helps train farmers to increase yields, thus improving their economic circumstances and quality of life.

Soil deterioration and degradation is another serious global threat to economic and environmental livelihood. Singapore applauds the United Nations General Assembly declaration of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fights against Desertification (UNDDDD), which was adopted to promote the protection of the drylands for the long-term “ability of drylands to provide value for humanity’s well being.” These objectives stem directly from the GA’s resolution “A/RES/64/201,” an attempt to address the threat of desertification and ensure that current international projects such as the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability, persist

Member states that rely heavily on foreign imports to meet food demands, including Singapore, cannot afford a global deficit in overall food production, nevertheless increasing food prices. The inability of global food production to meet the demands of the world exposes a flaw in international agricultural practice. Member states should redirect focus to intergovernmental organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development in order to adopt more long-term methods in sustainable food production.

The Republic of Singapore commends the increased emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices among member states, yet understands the inadequacy of current efforts to secure long-term stability. Singapore calls for a decreased reliance on subpar or unsustainable agricultural practices, such as harmful pesticide use, poor livestock management, and soil deterioration. It asks that member states come together to promote safe and sustainable agricultural practices that maximize yields and boost free international trade by keeping food costs low.

II. Analyzing Member States’ Security Policies to Promote Economic Growth

The Government of Singapore understands the importance of sound security policy and the role it plays in a stable, secure global economy. It fully supports previous General Assembly resolutions “A/RES/65/122” and “A/RES/65/41” which stress the importance of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) the standardization of communication technology, respectively.

Singapore was reported by the WTO’s annual report to be the “best place in the world to run business” and enjoys one of the world’s most open, trade-oriented economies; favorable positions on security issues has certainly made this possible. The Government of Singapore has always advocated in all of its domestic security policies the protection of public order, morality, parliamentary privilege, and racial and religious harmony, exemplified in the Internal Security Act, Temporary Provision Act, the Undesirable Publications Act and the Misuse of Drugs Act.

In terms of international terrorism, Singapore has condemned terrorist activity and is committed to the global fight against terrorism. Through various intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN, ASEAN, Asia-Europe Meeting and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Commonwealth, Singapore has engaged in “practical cooperation between countries...as the most effective means of achieving tangible progress in counter terrorism.”

Singapore believes that UN peacekeeping operations have made a significant contribution to international peace and security. According to the Memorandum of Understanding on UN Standby Arrangements, Singaporean commitments to UN peacekeeping include “placing planning officers, military observers, medical personnel and police officers on standby.” Singapore has partaken in 15 peacekeeping and observer missions, in which it has provided medical support, provided military advisors for national reconciliation and supervised UN sponsored elections in countries like Timor-Leste, Nepal, Namibia, Guatemala, Cambodia, South Africa and Afghanistan. Singaporeans have held senior appointments in UN peacekeeping operations, including Deputy Force Commander/Chief of Staff in the UN's Iraq/Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), Deputy Chief of Staff (Civil/Military Affairs) in the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET), Force Commander in the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) and more recently, Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary-General for the Security Sector and Rule of Law in the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Meaningful economic development cannot take place if disputants in global conflicts are armed. Singapore supports global efforts to bring about the disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has used an export controls system to regulate the flow of strategic goods and stymie the illicit movement of goods and technology concerning the development, production, and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as conventional arms and military equipment.

Concerning nuclear non-proliferation, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Law K Shanmugam affirmed that “Singapore and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has pledged to support the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) efforts to strengthen the global nuclear safety framework.” Singapore has accepted international disarmament treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Singapore argues that regional conflict management through regional organizations, much like ASEAN, is a much more efficient method than operating on an international scale, as expressed in resolution “A/Res/65/83.” However, these aspirations might seem quixotic when considered unilaterally. Singapore realizes global security is contingent solely on multilateral cooperation, through fora like the UN and the ASEAN Regional Forum. These initiatives reaffirm the importance of sound security in a stable global economy.

III. Engaging the Youth of Member States Economically, Politically, and Socially

Singapore stresses the priority of improving the economic circumstances of the youth of Member States above political and social participation. By providing youth with equitable employment and a viable income, only then can they engage in healthy political and social discourse and contribute to the development of wealthier economies, fairer societies and greater stability. In the September, 2000 Millennium Summit, the largest ever congregation of heads of state recognized the political urgency and relevance of addressing the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. Global youth unemployment is at an all time high. In 2009, about 81 million young people were unemployed, the most ever. The International Labour Organization has reported that the youth unemployment rate climbed from 11.9 per cent in 2007 to 13 per cent in 2009, and is expected to increase.

Singapore has a record of cooperation with the organization Youth Employment (Singapore), whose goal remains “to empower youths with the pertinent knowledge and an untrammelled capacity to increase employability and employment opportunities.” It has also cooperated with Mayors Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP) to develop a youth employment program.

The Republic of Singapore supports further intergovernmental cooperation between entities like the ILO, the FAO, and UNESCO in building international consensus, promoting decent employment for youth living in rural areas and the promotion of access to quality education and training. The adoption of conditional cash transfer programs among member states, such as Brazil's “Bolsa Familia,” which help keep kids in school, while simultaneously improving their standard of living, would help integrate young men and women into society and mitigate the incentives that criminal and gang activity provide.

Also, the engagement of youth within the societal framework of Member States is crucial to the long-term stability and security of international affairs. Through the Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports (MCYS), Singapore has facilitated attempts at integrating its youth in social affairs. These include protection under the Children and Youth Persons Act, its current obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, and its work through National Committee on Youth Guidance and Rehabilitation (NYGR).