

**SPEECH BY MRS JOSEPHINE TEO, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION, AT THE SICW SUMMIT
ON 18 OCTOBER 2022, 7.00PM**

Distinguished Guests
Colleagues and Friends
Our Guest of Honour, Senior Minister Teo Chee Hean

Introduction

1. Welcome to the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) 2022. We appreciate all of our guests for making your way to our city, especially since the last two editions of SICW could not be held fully in-person. We are very happy to host the many reunions of long-time friends and partners taking place these few days. Equally, there is an opportunity to make new connections with colleagues who are joining in the SICW community for the very first time.

Our operating context in the digital domain remains challenging.

2. These connections are all the more important now as we observe the conflicts deepening and threatening to tear our world apart.

a. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has sharpened divisions among countries.

b. We know international consensus is much needed to move forward on important issues, including cyber. But we also know that alignment has become harder to achieve.

3. We continue to face an uphill battle to secure widely used technologies against malicious cyber actors.

a. These “bad hats” are constantly innovating to develop new tools, techniques, and procedures to target both newly uncovered vulnerabilities, and old vulnerabilities that remain unpatched or poorly patched.

b. As a result, cyberattacks have grown in scale and impact.

c. We were reminded of the serious, real-world implications of cyberattacks earlier this year when the Costa Rica government suffered a large-scale ransomware attack that disrupted multiple government services.

d. It resulted in a national state of emergency. The public was deprived of healthcare services because medical records became inaccessible. As cargo containers could not be processed fast enough using pen and paper, trade flows ground to a halt. Livelihoods were affected as government pay systems became frozen.

4. Against this challenging backdrop of rising geopolitical tensions and an evolving cyber threat landscape, our meeting at the SICW has taken on added significance.

a. Participation at SICW is not limited to states. We include – indeed welcome private sector firms as well as non-governmental organisations.



- b. By adopting this multi-stakeholder approach, we seek to bring together stakeholders across different domains to discuss the critical cybersecurity challenges of the day. This reflects the fact that cyber threats do not respect boundaries, whether physical, geographical or organisational.

We need a strong global cybersecurity architecture to address these challenges. Strengthening the global cybersecurity architecture will require a multi-stakeholder approach.

5. Singapore believes that this multi-stakeholder approach is what we need to strengthen our global cybersecurity architecture, by not only making sure that there are platforms for discussions and consensus-building, but to also hear all stakeholders give voice to their perspectives and concerns.

6. A multi-stakeholder approach is key because cybersecurity is a team effort. Governments cannot do it alone. Therefore, partnerships among stakeholders – governments, industry, academia – are needed to leverage our collective wisdom and action in the digital domain.

7. We also believe that this approach helps to minimise the spill-over of geopolitical tensions into the digital domain by keeping open channels of communications, and building shared expectations and norms on behaviour.

8. Ultimately, we are all better served by having a strong global cybersecurity architecture that gives our people and businesses the confidence and trust to engage in the digital domain.

9. This means all of us doing our part to help our cyberspace remain open, stable, and interoperable.

Conclusion

10. Creating a safe and secure cyberspace is therefore our collective responsibility. I hope that as one of the premier international cyber conferences, SICW will continue to be the platform where you meet friends and partners to share views on how to build and strengthen our global cybersecurity architecture together.

11. This evening, in particular, we look forward to hearing from our distinguished speakers, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, and the US Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr Alejandro Mayorkas. I am certain we will have much to learn from their perspectives on how we can make our world safer, both physically and digitally.

12. Thank you all again for being here.