**Modern Society: GP Learning Studio – Issue Discussion**

**Is Singapore ready for future challenges?**

**1. Focus of Discussion**

**1.1. Progress of Singapore**

- One of the four ‘Asian Tigers’

- One of the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in the world

**1.2 Recent examples**

- Singapore hosted the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2019 for defence ministers and security chiefs

- 2018 North Korea–United States Summit in Singapore

**1.3 Scope of discussion**

 **1.3.1 Categorisation**

- Economic

- Social

- Education

**2A. Is Singapore ready for the economic challenges?**

 **2A.1 Challenges**

 - Technological disruptions

- Government initiatives to prepare the country for technological advancements

 **2A.2 Example 1**

* Budget 2018
	+ Minister Heng Swee Keat identified emergence of new technologies as one of the three major shifts from 2020 onwards
	+ Emphasis on Industry 4.0, e-commerce and the sharing economy
* i4.0 strategy
	+ Investment in R&D projects
	+ Digitization and automation of manufacturing processes
	+ Maintenance of economic competitiveness

**2A.3 Example 2**

* Smart Nation Initiative
	+ Began in 2014
	+ Made almost all public services accessible online
* Singapore chaired ASEAN in 2018
	+ Technological innovation was the central focus
	+ Established ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)
		- Collaborative platform
		- Promote sustainable urban development in Southeast Asia
		- Increased usage of technology

**2B. Why Singapore may not be ready for the economic challenges?**

 **2B.1 Challenges**

 - Outbreak of geopolitical conflicts and tensions

 🡪 results in volatile economic shocks

 - Clash of economic giants

 🡪 Singapore’s small geographical size

 🡪 Heavily dependent on external markets for growth

 🡪 Vulnerable to changing political climate

 🡪 Greater economic stability

 **2B.2 Example 1**

* Sino-American trade war
	+ Began in 2018
	+ Report by ICAEW – published in June 2019
		- Projected Singapore’s economic performance to decline
		- May enter recession by 2020 should trade war persist
	+ Tariff hikes by USA and China
		- Fall in Singapore’s export growth
		- Given both countries are the Republic’s largest trading partners

**3A. Is Singapore ready for the social challenges?**

 **3A.1 Challenges**

 - Threat of social division

 - Government initiatives to maintain social harmony and stability

 🡪 Cultural preservation

 🡪 Maintenance of social harmony

 **3A.2 Example 1**

* National Heritage Board (NHB)
	+ To preserve and celebrate shared cultural heritage of Singapore
	+ Organise heritage programmes and exhibitions

 **3A.3 Example 2**

* Racial Harmony Day
	+ Annual celebration – importance of inter-ethnic cohesion
* Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) classes in school
	+ Inclusion of important messages

**3B. Why Singapore may not be ready for the social challenges?**

 **3B.1 Challenges**

 - Clash of alternative modern values with traditional family values

 🡪 Creation of a disenfranchised society

 - Gradual acceptance of modern values

 🡪 Rise of social frictions

 🡪 Clash with individuals who uphold traditional values

 **3B.2 Example 1**

* Pink Dot movement
	+ Began in 2009
* Survey by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)
	+ Published in May 2019
	+ Shift in liberal values towards gay rights
	+ Younger respondents were more liberal in their views
* ‘Wear White’ event in 2014
	+ Defence of traditional Islamic values

 **3B.3 Example 2**

* Penal Code 377A
	+ Petition in Singapore to repeal the Penal Code 377A
	+ Counter-petition was created in response
* National Council of Churches of Singapore (NCCS)
	+ Rejected the repeal as alternative lifestyles would harm families and societies