

**BRIEFING BY OEWG CHAIR BURHAN GAFOOR FOR
77TH UNGA FIRST COMMITTEE CLUSTER 5
(OTHER DISARMAMENT MEASURES AND INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY) THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS
25 OCTOBER 2022**

1. Mr President, excellencies, distinguished colleagues, good morning. It is my pleasure to brief the First Committee today in my capacity as Chair of the Open ended-working group on the security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025.
2. This OEWG has convened three substantive sessions thus far, in December last year, as well as in March and July this year. The first two substantive sessions in December 2021 and March 2022 were marked by extensive debate over the issue of stakeholder modalities. Subsequently, member states were able to agree on a set of modalities that I had proposed in my capacity as Chair, and which the OEWG subsequently adopted at the third substantive session in July 2022.
3. Over the course of the three substantive sessions, delegations also had a robust exchange of views on all six pillars of the OEWG’s mandate as set out in resolution 75/240, namely “existing and potential threats”, “rules, norms and principles of responsible state behaviour”, “international law”, “confidence-building measures”, “capacity-building” and “regular institutional dialogue”.
4. The First Committee will also recall that resolution 75/240 further mandated the OEWG “to submit, for adoption by consensus, annual progress reports”. With the shared objective of achieving positive, action-oriented outcomes, member states engaged in constructive discussions on the various thematic areas. I am pleased to inform you that the constructive approach taken by all delegations led to the successful adoption, by consensus, of the OEWG’s first annual progress report, at the third substantive session in July 2022. I take this opportunity to thank all delegations for

their constructive approach and their commitment to working together in a spirit of consensus.

5. Let me give a brief overview of the annual progress report. All six pillars of the OEWG's mandate are reflected in the report, with each of their respective sections comprising two substantive parts – first, reflecting the discussions that member states had on the topic; and second, recommended next steps for member states to take moving forward, including having focused discussions under each pillar at the fourth and fifth substantive sessions in 2023.
6. Specifically, the **threats section** noted the increase in incidents involving the malicious use of ICTs by State and non-State actors, as well as the implications of harmful ICT activity on various fronts, including critical infrastructure. It is also reflected that member states would continue to exchange views on existing and potential threats to ICT security, and possible cooperative measures to address those threats. The **sections on norms, international law, confidence-building measures, capacity building and regular institutional dialogue** reflect non-exhaustive lists of various concrete, action-oriented proposals. These proposals will require further in-depth discussions at forthcoming substantive sessions.
7. In addition, one concrete initiative reflected under the CBMs section is the agreement to establish **a global, inter-governmental, points of contact directory**. Accordingly, there was agreement for member states to engage in further focused discussions on the development of such a directory at the fourth and fifth substantive sessions. The UN Secretariat is already in the midst of collating views from states on this directory, which it will use as the basis for a background information paper to be disseminated in January 2023. I also understand that the UN Secretariat is prepared to give a presentation on its preliminary findings during the informal intersessional meeting to be convened from 5 to 9 December 2022. There are many specific technical details

that will need to be considered before such a directory can be operationalized. It will fall to the OEWG to elaborate those details, and it is my intention to begin work on this task as soon as possible.

8. As mentioned, I have also informed delegations that I will be convening inter-sessional meetings in December 2022 for member states to have discussions on confidence building measures, as part of the recommended next steps in the annual progress report. At this meeting, member states will also have the opportunity to dive deep into discussions on the other pillars. This will help to lay the groundwork to facilitate progress on these issues at next year's substantive sessions.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

9. The OEWG is a confidence building mechanism and the annual progress report serves as an important roadmap to ensure that this CBM remains effective and productive, and functions to the benefit of all member states. It is my hope that guided by this annual progress report, member states will continue to work with each other constructively to implement the agreed outcomes and elaborate on areas where we can find further convergence.
10. In this regard, Singapore has tabled a draft decision for this Committee's consideration under agenda item 94, seeking the General Assembly's endorsement of the annual progress report. Adoption of this decision by consensus will strengthen and reinforce the consensus reached at our third substantive session. Every delegation has a responsibility to build and strengthen the spirit of consensus that has so far characterized the work of the OEWG. I therefore call on all delegations to reach out to other delegations, to talk to each other, and to make an effort to understand each other. Ultimately, achieving consensus will depend on building trust and confidence and, on that basis, making some compromises to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes

for all countries. A consensus outcome will not be achievable if delegations do not demonstrate flexibility or if delegations insist on their correctness of their own approach or positions. It is my hope that when the OEWG next re-convenes we will be able to do work together in a spirit of positive engagement and constructive partnership in order to build trust, build confidence and achieve consensus outcomes.

11. I urge all member states to participate actively and constructively in the coming OEWG discussions in New York, including at the forthcoming informal intersessional meeting in December 2022. I also look forward to continuing to give regional organisations and relevant stakeholders the opportunity to enrich our work by sharing their valuable knowledge and unique perspectives.

12. Let me conclude by once again thanking you and your delegations in New York and from capitals for your active and constructive participation in the OEWG discussions. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you in ensuring the success of the OEWG, to fulfil our shared vision of an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. Thank you.

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