**Statement by South Africa During the Thematic Debate on Other disarmament measures and international security at the First Committee of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly**
**20 October 2022**

Chairperson,

South Africa aligns with the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement.

South Africa supported the 2021 outcomes of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the first Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). It is, however, important to remain united behind a single process and we look forward to the work of the fourth and fifth sessions of the second Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of ICTs. In this vein, we congratulate Member States for adopting the 2022 Annual Report of the Working Group and look forward to reaching common understandings on security of ICTs.

South Africa remains concerned by the growing threat of cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure. While we believe we should confront these threats through greater cooperation and the development of best practice mechanisms, these efforts should support national priorities and efforts to identify and designate such infrastructure. States, especially developing countries, are all at varying positions of risk given the varying capacities of States to respond to the threats posed by malicious acts in cyberspace.

In this context, South Africa values the importance of both implementation and further development of existing norms. My delegation prioritises implementation which in our view will contribute to a better understanding of the gaps in existing norms, if any, thus informing the need for new norms to be developed. Implementation is also an opportunity to identify effective practices and capacity building requirements.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes efforts towards the elaboration of a Programme of Action (PoA) as part of the work of the OEWG. We are confident that through our discussions on security of ICTs in the Working Group we can reach a common understanding of the threats and vulnerabilities of states that will need to be addressed in a POA. While South Africa has long supported the PoA, we believe that the OEWG remains the appropriate forum to elaborate on the PoA and its establishment. We thus recall the recommendation from the consensus Annual Progress Report of the OEWG for it to further elaborate the PoA with a view towards its possible establishment as a mechanism to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs, which would, inter alia, support the capacities of States in implementing commitments in their use of ICTs.

We also believe that the engagement of all relevant actors including civil society and the private sector to both understand the nature of these threats and to cooperate and adequately address, across all of society, the threats posed by both State and non-State actors, will enrich this Member State-driven process.

I thank you.