

Statement delivered by H.E. Ms. Kitty Sweeb, Permanent Representative of the Republic of SURINAME at the Organizational Session of the OEWG on developments in the field of ICTs in the context of international security 2021-2025

New York, 1 June 2021

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset I congratulate you warmly on your election as Chair of the OEWG 2021-2025. My delegation has every confidence - given your previous and extensive diplomatic work in multilateral relations - that you will successfully guide the process. Please be assured of Suriname's full support during your tenure.

My delegation would like to make comments on some of the organizational issues before us.

On the modalities in general, we support conducting the work of the OEWG on the basis of the previously agreed modalities for the first Working Group, as those proved to be very successful.

We are pleased that on decision-making, the Group has already decided to do this on the basis of consensus. Given the complicated subject-matter, we are confident that Member States will continue to conduct the work of the OEWG in good faith, making every effort towards reaching a consensual outcome.

With respect to the participation of multi-stakeholders, we recognize the major role played by industry stakeholders in the development and maintenance of, for example, ICT infrastructures, and it is important that their views are shared, and that the technical information can contribute to our discussions. At the same time, we must make sure that our interactions with stakeholders do not disproportionately affect the work of the OEWG – which is to develop principles for the responsible behaviour of States, between States, and to ultimately be implemented by States.

As such, my delegation would prefer to follow the established practice by the General Assembly as to the participation of observers. We are confident that the Working Group can explore and find additional means of deliberation with stakeholders, so that their views can become part of our considerations.

Subgroups

Regarding the creation of subgroups, we support focusing on our work through thematic debates, but as a small member state, we would like to highlight that such subgroup meetings should not be held in parallel. Rather, we prefer that they take place consecutively, in order to facilitate the effective participation of small delegations, such as my own.

Suriname welcomes the proposal to hold intersessional meetings through which deliberation can continue to take place, while also possibly expanding in the future the involvement of participants elsewhere. In the coming period in particular, this would allow delegations to fully prepare ahead of the first Substantive Session in December of this year and be effective with our meeting time.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Suriname would like to reiterate our full support for the inclusive process of the OEWG, and our confidence in your guidance thereof. We look forward to continuing consultations with you, Mr. Chair - formally and informally.

Thank you.