

15 November 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour of addressing you in my capacity as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG), established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/240 adopted on 31 December 2020.

The first substantive session of the OEWG will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 13 to 17 December 2021. Thereafter, the OEWG will meet for two substantive sessions each in 2022 and 2023, and three substantive sessions each in 2024 and 2025. A **tentative schedule of meetings through 2023** is enclosed for your reference.

Programme of Work

I am pleased to convey the **programme of work for the first substantive session**. My intention is to hold the session in-person with no arrangements for “hybrid” virtual participation, in keeping with the modalities of the recent session of the First Committee. Information regarding the specific meeting rooms for each meeting of the session will be communicated in due course by the Secretariat.

I have invited Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, to give opening remarks at our first session. There will also be pre-recorded statements from Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the OEWG on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (2019-2021), and Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (2019-2021).

The programme of work has been structured in line with the agenda adopted at our organizational session ([A/AC.292/2021/1](#)) and General Assembly resolution [75/240](#). The programme of work also takes into account the chapter headings of the consensus report of the 2019-2021 OEWG ([A/75/816](#)), with a view to ensuring continuity in the process and building on the rich discussions of the previous OEWG. In line with the agenda, the OEWG will also consider initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies. I therefore invite all interested delegations to present their initiatives during discussions under the relevant agenda items.

It is my intention and hope to facilitate a discussion at the first substantive session that is forward-looking and action oriented. Accordingly, I encourage delegations to go beyond general statements and well-known positions and dive deeper into issues, for example by presenting concrete proposals and suggestions on the different topics on the agenda. In this regard, I have prepared a **list of guiding questions** on the different topics, which I invite delegations to address in their statements.

Annexed to the list of guiding questions is a **non-exhaustive list of informative documents** that delegations may wish to use in their preparations for the first substantive session.

Pending Organizational Issue

At the first substantive session, the OEWG will need to address the pending organizational issue of the modalities of stakeholder participation. Having consulted widely with delegations during the inter-sessional period, I have concluded that the most acceptable and prudent course of action would be to maintain the precedent of the first OEWG with regard to the participation of stakeholders in formal meetings.¹ As occurred during the previous OEWG, the OEWG can continue to engage stakeholders in informal consultative meetings.

As Chair of the OEWG, I am committed to engaging with stakeholders in a systematic, sustained, and substantive manner. It is my intention to begin informal consultative meetings with stakeholders in early 2022, the dates of which are included in the tentative schedule of meetings.

For your information, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has set up a website for the OEWG (www.meetings.unoda.org/meeting/oewg-ict-2021). All delegations are invited to submit working papers and inputs to the Chair, as well as information on side-events being organized, through the Office for Disarmament Affairs (Ms. Katherine Prizeman, prizeman@un.org). Such inputs, working papers and side-event information can be published on the website at the request of States.

I would like to invite delegations to an **informal virtual briefing** on the preparations for the first substantive session on Thursday, 18 November 2021 at 9.00am (New York time). A **logistical note**, including login details, is enclosed.

Finally, I wish to invite all Heads of Delegations to an in-person cocktail reception on Monday, 13 December 2021 at 6.30pm at the Permanent Mission of Singapore. The **cocktail reception invitation** is enclosed.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BURHAN GAFOOR
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

¹ Based on A/AC.290/2021 – Non-member States, intergovernmental organisations and entities that had been granted observer status by the Assembly had a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and work of the Group as observers. Relevant entities of the United Nations system would also be invited to participate for technical information purposes only. In addition, relevant non-governmental organisations that were in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in accordance with resolution 1996/31 would inform the secretariat of the Group of their interest in participating in its work. Other interested non-governmental organisations relevant and competent to the scope and purpose of the Group would also inform the secretariat of the Group of their interest, and would accordingly be invited to participate, on a non-objection basis, as observers.

Enclosures:

- Annex A – Tentative schedule of OEWG meetings through 2023
- Annex B – Provisional programme of work for the first substantive session
- Annex C – List of guiding questions and non-exhaustive list of informative documents
- Annex D – Logistical Note for informal virtual briefing on 18 November at 9.00am (EST, New York time)
- Annex E – Invitation to an in-person cocktail reception at the Singapore Mission on Monday, 13 December at 6.30pm

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF OEWG MEETINGS THROUGH 2023²

First substantive session

13 to 17 December 2021

Second substantive session

28 March to 1 April 2022

Third substantive session

25 to 29 July 2022

Fourth substantive session

6 to 10 March 2023

Fifth substantive session

17 to 21 July 2023

Tentative dates for informal consultative meetings with stakeholders to be convened by the Chair of the OEWG (*additional meetings with stakeholders may be convened by the Chair, if needed*).

- 24 March 2022
- 21 July 2022
- 2 March 2023
- 13 July 2023

² Dates for the substantive sessions in 2024 and 2025 will be announced in due course.

**Open-ended working group on security of
and in the use of information and
communications technologies 2021–2025**

First substantive session, New York
13-17 December 2021

Provisional Programme of Work³

Monday, 13 December

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Opening of the session

Opening statements

- Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
- H.E. Ambassador Burhan Gafoor, Chair of the Open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025
- H.E. Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (pre-recorded)
- H.E. Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace (pre-recorded)

Agenda item 3: Organization of work

Agenda item 4: General exchange of views

3-6 p.m.

Agenda item 4: General exchange of views *(continued)*

³ To be issued as document A/AC.292/2021/2.

Tuesday, 14 December

10 a.m.-1 p.m. **Agenda item 4: General exchange of views** (*continued*)

3-6 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussions on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240**

Continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings, existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, inter alia, data security, and possible cooperative measures to prevent and counter such threats

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

Wednesday, 15 December

10 a.m.-1 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussions on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240** (*continued*)

Further develop the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States and the ways for their implementation and, if necessary, to introduce changes to them or elaborate additional rules of behaviour

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

3-6 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussions on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240** (*continued*)

How international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

Thursday, 16 December

10 a.m.-1 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussions on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240** *(continued)*

Confidence-building measures

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

3-6 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussions on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240** *(continued)*

Capacity- building

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

Friday, 17 December

10 a.m.-1 p.m. **Agenda item 5: Discussion on substantive issues contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 75/240** *(continued)*

Establish, under the auspices of the United Nations, regular, institutional dialogue with the broad participation of States

- Initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies

3-6 p.m. **Agenda item 6: Other matters**

Closing of the session

- Concluding remarks by the Chair

Note: Delegations can choose to make group or national statements in-person, in written form, or by submitting pre-recorded video statements. A link and instructions for uploading pre-recorded statements will be shared with delegations via email by the Secretariat. Delegations that intend to submit pre-recorded video statements may contact the Secretariat for support (Ms. Katherine Prizeman, Office for Disarmament Affairs, prizeman@un.org).

LIST OF GUIDING QUESTIONS AND NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF INFORMATIVE DOCUMENTS FOR THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

13-17 DECEMBER 2021

General questions that States may wish to address during the general exchange of views

1. Many States have called for an action-oriented approach. How can the OEWG be an action-oriented process and deliver tangible results to States while building on previous outcomes?
2. Are there specific issues that require urgent attention and early outcomes, bearing in mind the need to address all issues on the agenda in a balanced and comprehensive manner?
3. Given the unique role that stakeholders play in cyberspace, how can the OEWG engage them meaningfully and substantively in order to support discussions by Member States and deliver tangible results?

I. Continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings, existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, inter alia, data security, and possible cooperative measures to prevent and counter such threats

1. Noting the extensive discussions on existing and potential threats, what are some examples of urgent and challenging existing and potential threats that States are facing?
2. What capacities and structures are needed at the national level to prevent, detect, and respond to existing and potential threats? What can the OEWG do concretely to facilitate the building up of such capacities at the national level?
3. How can we apply the existing framework of agreed measures from previous OEWG and GGE reports, including norms, to deal with existing and potential threats? How can we enhance the application of the framework of agreed measures?
4. How are existing and potential threats experienced differently by countries and different segments of society? How can the OEWG address the differentiated impact?
5. What are other aspects the OEWG should consider with regard to this topic?

II. Further develop the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States and the ways for their implementation and, if necessary, to introduce changes to them or elaborate additional rules of behaviour

1. How can States better survey their national efforts to implement norms and assist each other in this endeavour? What can the OEWG do to facilitate the conduct of national surveys on norm implementation?
2. How can the OEWG facilitate the sharing of experience and good practice on norms implementation at the national and regional/sub-regional levels?
3. What concrete actions have States undertaken to strengthen measures to protect critical infrastructure from ICT threats? How can the OEWG facilitate the exchange of good practices with regard to critical infrastructure protection?
4. Based on States' experience in implementing the norms and taking into account previous OEWG and GGE reports, is there a need to further elaborate the existing norms or to consider the development of additional norms over time? If yes, what are the key issues that the OEWG should address?
5. What role might other stakeholders such as the private sector and the technical community play in the implementation of norms?
6. What are other aspects the OEWG should consider with regard to this topic?

III. How international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States

1. States are encouraged to inform the Secretary-General of their national views on assessments on how international law applies to their use of ICTs in the context of international security. How can the OEWG facilitate the sharing of such national views and practices, including through existing tools such as the UNIDIR Cyber Policy Portal?
2. How can the OEWG facilitate the further study of and discussions on how to deepen common understanding on how international law applies to State use of ICTs? Which specific rules and principles of international law applicable to State ICT use merit further study?
3. What additional capacity is needed e.g., in the areas of international law, national legislation and policy, to enable all States to further contribute to building the common understanding of how international law applies to the use of ICTs by States?
4. What are other aspects the OEWG should consider with regard to this topic?

IV. Confidence-building measures

1. What confidence-building measures have been identified and which have been practically implemented by States at the bilateral, regional, or multilateral level? How can the OEWG further facilitate the exchange of lessons and good practices on confidence-building measures?
2. How can the OEWG facilitate support for States to engage in transparency measures, such as by sharing relevant information and lessons learned including through the UNIDIR Cyber Policy Portal?
3. How can the OEWG facilitate support for States in nominating a Point of Contact, inter alia, at the technical, policy and diplomatic levels? How can the OEWG facilitate the coordination and information sharing among designated Points of Contacts?
4. Are there successful examples of a network or directory of Points of Contact? How can the OEWG facilitate the sharing of best practices and experience, and the application of a network and directory at the global level?
5. What are other aspects the OEWG should consider with regard to this topic?

V. Capacity-building

1. Which areas of capacity-building support should be prioritized for early action or urgent implementation? For example, in the following areas:
 - Developing and implementing national ICT policies, strategies, and programmes
 - Creating and enhancing capacity of CERTs and arrangements for cooperation
 - Improving security, resilience, and protection of civilian infrastructure
 - Building technical, legal and policy capacities of States to detect, investigate and resolve ICT incidents
 - Deepening common understandings of how international law applies to the use of ICTs by States
 - Enhancing technical and legal capacities to investigate ICT incidents
 - Implementation of voluntary norms
2. What are some of the capacity-building initiatives being undertaken at the bilateral and regional/subregional level? How can the OEWG facilitate the sharing of good practices that can be applied at the global level?
3. How can the OEWG facilitate the mapping of existing needs for better coordination and resourcing of capacity-building efforts? Can the UN play a matchmaking or repository role in capacity building?

4. What are other aspects the OEWG should consider with regard to this topic?

VI. Establish, under the auspices of the United Nations, regular institutional dialogue with the broad participation of States

1. In the long-term, how can a future regular institutional dialogue support action-oriented measures in view of the evolving peace and security threats posed by State use of ICTs?

Non-exhaustive list of informative documents

1. **Final report of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security** pursuant to Assembly resolution [73/27](#) and decision 75/550, [A/75/816](#)
 - **Chair's Summary**, [A/75/816](#)
 - **Compendium of statements in explanation of position on the final report**, [A/AC.290/2021/INF/2](#)
 - **Outcome Report of the Informal Multistakeholder Consultation on OEWG Zero Draft Report**, [25 February 2021](#)
 - **Informal Multistakeholder Cyber Dialogue**, [Summary Report](#), 4-10 December 2020
 - **Website of the 2019-2021 OEWG, including official documents, working papers and technical papers**, [UN Office for Disarmament Affairs](#)

2. **2019-2021 Report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security**, [A/76/135](#)
 - **Official compendium of voluntary national contributions on the subject of how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States** submitted by participating governmental experts in the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/266](#), [A/76/136*](#)

 - **Collated summaries: Regional consultations series of the GGE on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security**, [2019-2020](#)

 - **Previous GGEs with consensual final reports**
 - i. 2014-2015, [A/70/174](#)
 - ii. 2012-2013, [A/68/98*](#)
 - iii. 2009-2010, [A/65/201](#)

3. **United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs [Fact Sheet](#)**, Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

**LOGISTICAL NOTE FOR INFORMAL VIRTUAL BRIEFING BY CHAIR OF THE
OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP,
H.E. AMBASSADOR BURHAN GAFOOR,
AHEAD OF THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE SESSION**

THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2021, 9AM-10:30AM (EST)

Information for participants

How to participate

1. The informal briefing will be held on **18 November 2021 from 9 – 10.30 am** (EST, New York local time) via Microsoft Teams.
2. To join the briefing, please click on the following Microsoft Teams link.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

- a. For participants using **mobile devices** who do not have a Microsoft Teams account, click “Join as guest.” Participants will then be required to enter their name. Please use the following format when adding your name: First Name Last Name (Delegation), then click “Join Meeting.” **It is important to include this information, particularly the name of the Delegation, in order to be granted access.**
 - b. For participants using a **computer** who do not have a Microsoft Teams account, click on “Join on the Web instead”, then click ‘allow use of microphone and camera’. Participants will then be required to enter their name. Please use the following format when adding your name: First Name Last Name (Delegation), then click “Join Meeting.” **It is important that you include this information, particularly the name of the Delegation, in order to be granted access.**
 - c. For participants who **have a Microsoft Teams account**, click on “Sign in and join”.
3. After following the steps above, participants are requested to wait in the virtual “lobby” until the organizers admit them to the meeting.
 4. In order to allow the meeting to begin on time, all participants are requested to log in at least 10-15 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting.

Language

5. The informal briefing will be conducted in English only.

Conduct

6. Requesting the floor: Should you wish to speak, please use the chat function to indicate your request. The Chair of the meeting will yield the floor to participants accordingly.
7. Microphone mute: In order to avoid distractions or interruptions, please always mute your microphone, unless you have been given the floor.



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
UNITED NATIONS | NEW YORK

INVITATION

On the occasion of the first substantive session of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025

H.E. Ambassador Burhan Gafoor
*Chair of the OEWG and
Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations*

has the honour to invite the

Head of Delegation

*to a Reception on
Monday, 13 December 2021 at 6.30 pm
at the*

*Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations
318 East 48th Street
New York, NY 10017
(between 1st and 2nd Avenues)*

To confirm your participation, please RSVP at <https://bit.ly/oewg13dec>

Kindly Please Note:

- *Participation in this in-person event is for Heads of Delegation only*
- *The Singapore Mission complies with host-country COVID-19 guidelines*
- *Temperature screening will be conducted at the entrance for all guests*
- *We welcome fully vaccinated guests on the basis of the UN “honour system”*