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**Open Ended Working Group in the Field of Information and
Telecommunications in the Context of International Security**

General Exchange of Views

**Statement by H.E. Nathalie Jaarsma
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NEW YORK, 14 December 2021

General Exchange of Views

Thank you, Chair

At the outset, I would like to again congratulate you upon your assumption as Chair of this Open-ended Working Group. I firmly believe that under your able leadership we can achieve significant progress.

Please be assured of my delegation's full support.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary General Izumi Nakamitsu for her opening remarks, which provide us with continued guidance and support.

Finally, our deep appreciation goes out to ambassador Lauber and ambassador Patriota for their skillful Chairmanship over the past few years. I am convinced that the transparent and inclusive manner by which they approached their tasks, were instrumental in the successful and complementary outcomes we achieved together.

All States were able to engage in the OEWG, many of whom were represented by women diplomats; the GGE held regional as well as informal consultations with the wider UN membership; and essential engagement took place with the private sector, civil society and academia.

While the primary focus of our work is on international security, this wider engagement highlighted the importance of our work to all three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

ICTs are a catalyst for the international community's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We should harness this by closing the digital divide, and by ensuring a resilient cyberspace that allows for the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Because in the end malicious cyber activities, whether they are conducted against hospitals, energy networks or financial institutions, always affect real people – often vulnerable people. They reduce trust in digital technologies and services, hamper economic growth and impact international peace and stability.

Chair,

In our view, the latest OEWG and GGE reports form an important milestone. They are substantively rich and politically balanced.

The OEWG reaffirmed the UN framework for responsible State behavior. It enriched the framework with further clarity and pertinent new findings in response to common challenges. These included several elements that were important to my country, including with regard to the protection of the healthcare sector as well as the technical infrastructure essential to the general availability or integrity of the internet that, to date, has been upheld successfully thanks to the multi-stakeholder community.

The GGE, in turn, **also** reaffirmed the acquis and further elaborated on many elements of previous reports. It added much-needed clarity and practical guidance for the consideration of States.

Together, these complementary reports help us further understand the rules of the road, encourage restraint and provide concrete recommendations on how States can cooperate to prevent conflict in cyberspace.

The progress made has been cemented through the recently adopted General Assembly consensus resolution 76/19 that called upon States to be guided in their use of ICTs by the two reports. The Netherlands is proud to support the common US-Russian resolution as an initial co-sponsor along with many other Member States.

After looking back at what we have achieved, let me now turn to our way ahead.

Malicious uses of ICTs by State and non-State actors continue to increase in sophistication and impact.

The Netherlands will therefore continue to advance the rule-based order in cyberspace, based on the applicability of international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law.

In addressing the continuing challenges, the Netherlands is of the view that the OEWG should be results-oriented by facilitating practical cooperation and dialogue based on the guidance of the previous reports.

For example, more States can make known their views on how existing international law applies; establish clear mechanisms to notify one another in case of an ICT-incident; and further develop ways to responsibly report vulnerabilities.

At the same time, Chair, we cannot forgo the fact that increasing cyber resilience is challenging and resource-intensive: many states have expressed a need for international cooperation and capacity building.

To that end, the Netherlands is among a broad group of 54 co-sponsors to support the proposal noted in the OEWG report to support the capacities of States through a practical mechanism known as the Programme of Action.

We would like to further discuss this initiative with all States and relevant stakeholders, including within the OEWG.

Chair,

The Netherlands will listen and engage constructively with all delegations in order to make tangible progress towards a more open, free, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable and peaceful cyberspace.

Please allow me to reiterate my delegation's full support.

Thank you.