Mr. Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We welcome the convening of the second iteration of the OEWG, as a continuation of this United Nations mechanism established with the participation of all Member States, acting on the basis of consensus, to continue addressing the subject of developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. ASEAN once again congratulates you, Mr. Chair, for your assumption of duty as Chair of the OEWG (2021-2025). ASEAN will render its full cooperation and support to you and your team.

Mr. Chairperson,

2. It is imperative for the United Nations to continue playing a central role in discussions on cybersecurity, which must remain open and inclusive. ASEAN reaffirms the need to enhance cooperation to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful ICT environment and prevent the risk of misperception and miscalculation by developing trust and confidence. We welcomed the adoption, by consensus, of the final reports of the Open-ended working group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (OEWG) (2019-2021) and the 6th iteration of Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (GGE).
3. ASEAN recognises that the cyber domain represents an opportunity for significant regional economic and technological development. At the same time, we are cognisant of the increasing sophistication of the transboundary cyber threats facing us.

4. ASEAN reaffirms that international law, and in particular the UN Charter, is applicable to cyberspace and that state sovereignty and international norms and principles that flow from sovereignty apply to the conduct by States of ICT-related activities and to their jurisdiction over ICT infrastructure within their territory.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. ASEAN calls for States to work together to achieve a common understanding on the application of international law and the effective implementation of the existing norms, rules and principles to guide responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. ASEAN also stresses the importance of international cooperation in this field and of facilitating capacity building of States, especially for developing countries, which will allow States to effectively implement these norms, and to narrow the digital divide.

6. In ASEAN, cooperation on cybersecurity cuts across pillars and sectors, guided by the ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025 (ADM 2025) and the soon to be updated ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2017-2020. To tackle the coordination challenges, ASEAN has established a Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) last year to promote cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and strengthen cybersecurity in the region. Under this new mechanism, ASEAN is now developing a Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace to assist with the prioritization and implementation of the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs.

7. Furthermore, the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) helps to foster closer cooperation and consultation within ASEAN. The 6th AMCC held in October 2021, built on progress made on key cybersecurity matters discussed at previous AMCCs. ASEAN Member States noted the importance of the protection of Critical Information Infrastructure from cyber threats to ensure a safe and secure regional cyberspace, especially in light of new cybersecurity threats posed by ransomware as well as supply chain attacks and threats. ASEAN Member States welcomed the update to ASEAN’s strategy for cybersecurity cooperation, as laid out in the ASEAN
Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021-2025. ASEAN Member States also highlighted the importance of continuing to develop and implement coordinated regional cybersecurity capacity building programmes aimed at equipping ASEAN Member States with the policy, operational and technical capacities to implement the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in the use of ICTs.

8. ASEAN also welcomed the adoption by the 15th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) on 16th June 2021, concept papers on ASEAN Cyber Defence Network and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence, as important milestones in promoting practical cybersecurity cooperation in ASEAN. These efforts serve as Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) within the region, and ASEAN would like to encourage other regions to adopt similar measures, towards building trust and confidence at the global level.

9. ASEAN will continue coordinating cyber capacity-building programmes to help its Member States to implement the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs, and also to enhance the region’s cyber capacities as a whole. This common goal drives the work of the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence in Singapore and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre in Thailand. We look forward to greater coordination of cyber capacity building programmes by the UN.

10. ASEAN’s overall efforts are driven by the ASEAN Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 38th ASEAN Summit on 26 October 2021. Among others, the 4IR strategy offers a Strategic Framework that envisions creating a Digital ASEAN through focusing on areas, which include promoting technological governance and cybersecurity that is open, secure, transparent, and connected, and respects privacy and ethics in line with international best practices.

Mr. Chairperson,

11. In closing, ASEAN reiterates the importance of the OEWG’s platform and the valuable opportunities it accords all Member States to take part in the consultative process on an equal footing. We look forward to engaging the OEWG and other regional organisations to exchange experiences and best practices. Please rest assured, Mr. Chair, that ASEAN will continue its constructive engagement as we strive towards a substantial, substantive and
consensual outcome for the success of this new OEWG and in promoting peace and security in cyberspace.

**********