Opportunities and Challenges for Capacity-Building in the Cyber Realm

Side-event on 15 December 2021 at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations
Draft concept note

I. Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated our reliance on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in a sudden and dramatic manner. At the same time, we have evidenced a continuous rise in malicious cyber activities and growing systemic threats disrupting the functioning of critical infrastructure and digital services.

The need to integrate cyber capacity building and development policies has been widely acknowledged by the cyber community, academia and policy makers. However, there is a clear need for a further, broad-based dialogue between various stakeholders in the UN context, in order to foster a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges related to the practical implementation of cyber capacities, which could then help achieve broader development goals.

The recent reports by the GGE and OEWG highlight that international cooperation in cyber capacity building can strengthen States’ ability to detect, investigate and respond to threats emanating from cyberspace in a timely and effective manner, and ensure that all States have the capacity to act responsibly in their use of ICTs.

II. Key objective and guiding questions

The main objective of the discussion is to exchange views and promote a better understanding in the UN of opportunities and challenges, inter alia in the light of good practices on cyber capacity building, by bringing together various stakeholders in the area of cyber capacity building.

The following questions may help guide the discussion:

- What should be the priorities for the OEWG as regards to capacity building during the next five years from the multi-stakeholder perspective?
- How to involve and support the participation of academia, the private sector and civil society in the cyber capacity building processes?
- How to take into account the whole of society approach in capacity development?
- How to ensure sustainable and gender-responsive capacity building approaches in order to bridge the digital divide?

III. Format, time and venue

This interactive side-event will take place in-person on the margins of the OEWG session on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations. The discussion will be moderated by Finland’s Ambassador for Cyber Affairs, Mr. Jarmo Sareva.

Participants will include representatives from Member States, academia, the private sector and civil society. Kindly acknowledge that due to the limited space, the participation will be limited to one person per delegation. RSVPs on a first-come, first-served by 13 December COB.