Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I would like to start my remarks by congratulating you on your appointment to chair this open-ended working group. I also thank you for the commendable work you have done in the lead up to this meeting and for the effective facilitation of this first substantive session of the working group.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chair,

Ethiopia attaches great importance to this meeting and the UN based and UN led platform for intergovernmental multilateral dialogue on ICTs and security. It is of paramount importance that we are neither duplicating the works of other UN agencies nor creating a non-UN parallel platform to discuss this topic. My delegation also supports your proposal on the organization of work and participation of non-state actors. It maintains the intergovernmental nature of our work and enables us benefit from the contribution of non-state stakeholders.
We are of the view that germination of ICT as a phenomenon in the national power equation and therefore international security environment, gives us an opportunity to create a fair and equitable international order for regulation of power and state behavior. In this regard, we look forward to this first substantive deliberation of the open-ended working group on the matter of ICT and security.

Mr. Chair,

National or global security with a defining feature hinging on borders and nationality; and control of movement of goods and services is practically fading. The rapid development in ICT and the increasing dependance of social, economic, political and security interests on the ICT infrastructure calls for adjustment of the assumptions that went into framing of the norms for inter-state relations.

Nevertheless, as reaffirmed on resolutions 70/237, 73/27 and 73/266, the principles of international relations under the UN Charter, including sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, prohibition of the use or threat of the use of force, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are applicable to the use of ICTs. Furthermore, despite the difficulty of determining attribution, the basic rules on internationally wrongful acts are also of critical importance.

In relation, Ethiopia approaches this deliberation with the understanding that it is an attempt to enhance our comprehension on the application of the above principles in the context of the unique environment created by the use of ICT and not focused on
amending the principles of international relations or the content of
international law in substance.

Mr. Chair,

Malicious ICT activities have been a means resorted to by states
and non-state actors alike to accomplish a cause they cannot
achieve legally. It has been an alternative and concealer to a use
of conventional force to advance illegal causes. As to the
involvement of non-state actors, we have seen magnificent
corporate interests that can ably stand on their own. We have also
witnessed the ICT version of rendition.

In contravention with our undertaking provided under General
Assembly Resolution 73/27, the dissemination of false or distorted
news, which can be interpreted as interference in the internal
affairs of other States; and defamatory campaign, vilification or
hostile propaganda for the purpose of intervening or interfering in
the internal affairs of other States have been the most rampant.
This has mainly been propagated against developing and more
particularly African countries, including Ethiopia. The negative
ramification and harm caused by this irresponsible state behavior
has been more apparent during the global pandemic.

It is evident that no state is immune from this vice. With ICT, the
north-south divide is not as clear as it is in other apparatus of
national power. Similarly, the digital divide is not the best indicator
of the extent of culpability or vulnerability for malicious application
of ICT.

Ethiopia, one of the least digitized countries has been a recipient
of numerous attacks against public service institutions, security
agencies and private organizations, interestingly directed from identified countries and groups that claimed responsibility. We have also seen powerful states brought to the knees because of attacks, at times originating from the most unlikely sources, including youth in their parent's garage.

Therefore, in the age, peace and security is held by the button and in a situation where non-state actors have a manifest advantage if not superiority than states on the field, rule-based order is indispensable.

**Mr. Chair,**

From experience, we know that treaties with the strongest guarantee of reciprocity stand a better chance of compliance and uninterrupted application. Hopefully, the absence of clear divide and the prevailing comparable capability I made reference to, will encourage responsible state behavior that had taken a center stage in our discussions. It should also provide an impetus for development of an equitable international order that effectively promotes an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful information and communications technology environment.

Ethiopia appreciates and fully supports South–South, South–North, triangular, and regionally focused cooperation we endorsed in the conference report, back in February this year. Ethiopia has a cyber security policy that has international cooperation as a policy focus area with the objective of enabling knowledge and technology transfer and prevention of organized cybercrime such as cyber terrorism, cyber espionage, and other transnational cybercrimes.
The geographically distributed capability and the not so glaring north-south divide is a tangible advantage. It also indicates cooperation in these regimes must incorporate respect and prevention as much as they deal with positive cooperation.

More importantly, for developing countries and regions like Africa, the global dialogue on ICT ought to be anticipatory of the plans and strategies of interconnectivity among economies. Guidelines and instruments we come up with should not create stringent constraints on the development, acquisition and transfer of ICT in countries less advanced on the field. We therefore call for redoubling of our focus on capacity building and consideration of the interest of all states and regions at various levels of development.

In this meeting, we expect that capacity building will be seen in tandem with economic, social and human development with specific focus on quality education, technology transfer, development finance and other requisite elements that enable us foster a level field for assumption of obligations and state responsibility.

Mr. Chair, I would like to conclude by wishing our delegations a productive deliberation and consensual outcome. You have Ethiopia’s full support throughout the process.

I thank you