

General exchange of views – UK statement

In just two years' time, during this new OEWG, we will look back on a quarter of a century of UN work to uphold international peace and stability in cyberspace. Since colleagues first sat together here in New York in 1998 there have been positive outcomes and there have been difficult times.

We strongly welcome the two consensus reports and the single resolution secured this year. But in our support for those outcomes we should not overlook the very real challenges at hand in making progress. We are not all on the same path. And we lack the trust necessary to forge ahead in the manner some may hope.

We may experience them differently, but the threats to international peace and security from the misuse of technology – including in existing and future conflict, and outside of conflict situations – remain of primary concern to the UK. It is because we are united in our concerns about the continued irresponsible nature of some State activity in cyberspace that the UK will actively participate in this OEWG.

Chair, your guiding questions ask how we can be action-oriented and deliver results. You are right to push us beyond general statements into practicalities, as it is only here that we will find those areas of convergence your own delegation highlights.

In just the last few years we have secured two great achievements together. We have broadened the understanding of our work in a way that is accessible to all – from developing countries to great powers, from technical experts to seasoned diplomats. And we have drilled down further, drawing on our shared expertise, to generate new agreements. And we have done it all by consensus, bringing everyone with us as we make progress.

But as the Korean delegation highlighted, there is a mismatch between what is expected of us – what we have agreed to by consensus - and what is happening. Because of this the next step we take together must be as substantive and significant as those that went before. And it must deliver tangible change.

At home, my government is currently pursuing a policy of 'levelling up'. It works to reduce disparities between regions, bringing everyone up to the same higher living standards. Following a rush of global digitalisation, we have heard from many that 'levelling up' is the most urgent challenge we face in securing cyberspace.

'Levelling up' is what an action oriented process can deliver. We must embed equally all four elements of the framework that we have agreed together over the last 20+ years into common practice across all UN member states. We encourage all States to put forward proposals to turn the recommendations already agreed in our substantial *acquis* into reality; we will do just that in each section of our discussion.

Despite this core focus, we cannot lose sight of new and emerging challenges to peace and security in cyberspace. If this group is to find its way towards steps we can take together in future - to build on our framework and ensure it remains relevant – a shared picture of the threats we face will be key.

We must look forward and identify how we can continue our cooperation against the most severe threats, even where trust is lacking. That shared picture will be found where we drill down into the threats we all face from irresponsible state behaviour in the use of ICTs. This is the foundation to our cooperation.

However it may feel at times, we know that there is more that unites us than divides us in this context.