Statement by Finland
on behalf of the Nordic countries

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Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security
First Substantive Session

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(check against delivery)
Mr. Chair,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries – Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and my own country Finland. (We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered/to be delivered by the European Union.)

I wish to start by extending our congratulations to you on the assumption of the chairship of this working group. I assure you of our delegations’ readiness to engage constructively. We are confident that under your guidance, we are well placed to make a useful contribution to our shared objective of promoting a free, open and secure cyberspace.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that the work of the OEWG should be primarily focused on identifying areas where consensus has already been reached and building a program of work on that solid foundation. International law, including the UN Charter in its entirety, applies in cyberspace and provides the legal framework for responsible State behavior in their use of ICTs. This must be the starting point for the work of this OEWG.

In our shared view, the OEWG should advance a common understanding on how existing international law applies in cyber space. Such discussions are greatly facilitated by the efforts of many States - including from the Nordic region - that have put forward their national positions on the application of international law in cyber space. We thank all those States for their contributions and encourage more States to make their national positions known.

We welcome the additional layer of understanding that the report of the latest GGE has added to the voluntary, non-binding norms for the responsible State behavior. This provides an important foundation for our continued discussions.

We believe firmly that this Working Group can provide clear added value by elaborating further on various ways and means for global capacity building to address threats and challenges stemming from cyberspace.

The need for global capacity building efforts has been aptly highlighted by the GGE and OEWG. International cooperation in cyber capacity building can strengthen States’ ability to detect, investigate and respond, in a timely and effective manner, to threats emanating from cyberspace and ensure that all States have the capacity to act responsibly in their use of ICTs. In this regard, and to advance implementation of the UN framework at large, we support the proposal for a Programme of Action (PoA). The OEWG provides an opportunity for further exchange and elaboration on this initiative.

Mr. Chair,

There is a clear need for a further, broad-based dialogue between relevant stakeholders in order to foster a better understanding on the opportunities and challenges related to global capacity building. Talks and cooperation between states are necessary, but not sufficient. Ensuring a free, open and secure cyberspace where human rights and fundamental freedoms are preserved and promoted, is not only a common interest but also a shared responsibility.
We need to reach out and listen to all interested stakeholders of cyberspace – private sectors, civil society and academia. We expect the Open-Ended Working Group to provide a useful contribution to the global capacity building efforts. We believe that cyber capacity building is not only indispensable to the goal of digital development but we hope that it can serve as a unifying topic among the UN membership.

In closing, we are looking forward to a constructive process that will deepen our common understanding, enhance confidence and increase predictability and stability in and beyond cyberspace.

Thank you Mr. Chair.