Distinguished delegates, and colleagues.

On behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States, we would like to thank you very much for the opportunity address you today and Ambassador Gafoor, given this is our first time taking the floor, may we take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Working Group.

With the core values of democracy, human rights, security and development underlying the work of the organization, the OAS serves as a hemispheric political platform where member states can discuss their collective security threats and advance regional peace and stability efforts, including through the development of confidence building measures and other instruments such as treaties, declarations and resolutions.

As such, it is becoming increasingly important that our member states enhance interstate cooperation, transparency, predictability and stability, with the aim of reducing the risks of misperception, escalation, and conflict that may stem from the use of ICTs.

Mr. Chair, the Americas is a region characterized by great diversity, including diversity in technological development, cyber threat preparedness and resiliency. Today we can see varying perceptions of risk and vulnerability, varying degrees of implementation of international
standards and instruments, and/or varying levels of prevention and response capacities. This diversity is also reflected in varying degrees of cooperation. We know that to be effective, cooperation needs to happen regularly, at all levels — national, bilateral, regional, and international—and among all relevant stakeholders. More importantly, these same stakeholders need to work —individually and collectively -- to translate words into action with timely, cost-effective, and practical measures to facilitate cooperation and coordination.

This multi-stakeholder collaborative approach to addressing cyber threats recognizes that, no single organization, state or region can succeed in preventing and countering threats to cyberspace in isolation. The stability of one State directly --and indirectly-- affects the stability of its neighbors, and so contributing to a more peaceful, secure and cyberspace- is a shared responsibility.

Chair, the OAS, through its Secretariat for the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), has worked for nearly 20 years to strengthen the cybersecurity capacities of its 34 member states through trainings, cyber exercises, the development and implementation of cybersecurity policies, and the development of cybersecurity confidence building measures.

As such, please know that you have an ally in our collective pursuit of promoting greater peace and security around the world, particularly in the cyber space, and we would be honored to continue supporting the extremely important work happening here today.

Specifically, we would be pleased to work together with our UN colleagues to act as a regional convener of future meetings around this topic and facilitate the involvement of stakeholders as determined.

We thank you for the opportunity to continue to participate in this process as an observer and look forward to how the discussion will dialogue will evolve.