24.03.2022

To:

Burhan Gafoor
Chair Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025

RE: VIRTUAL, INFORMAL DIALOGUE WITH THE CHAIR OF THE OEWG ICTS (2021-20225)

Ahead of the second substantive session of the OEWG, which will take place from 28 March to 1 April 2022 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Chair requested stakeholder input through an informal dialogue. The Centre for Multilateral Affairs made oral submission in regard to how stakeholders can assist member states in implementing existing rules, norms and principles of responsible state behavior.

Based on our research in Uganda on relevance of norms in fostering bi-lateral state relations for responsible state behavior in the cyberspace, we recognize that norms are appreciated as effective mechanism towards building a peaceful cyberspace. Yet norms alone may be insufficient. The fact that normative frameworks and its success are attained through the processes themselves highlights the relevance of engaging every stakeholder group in the cyberspace debate and in shaping its future developments.

Our findings in Uganda support the view that norms are one of the essential mechanism for building cyberstability, minimizing inter-state conflict and the processes of norm development themselves foster confidence building measures. We note that the contributions of stakeholders including that of member states are critical to shaping cyber policy and stability. Yet, level of awareness of these norms, principles and rules at domestic (state) level especially among governmental actors are very limited – Our question to the Chair:
How can Chair ensure there is deliberate process of meaningfully engaging member states especially Africa group— and other global south member states and regional groups?

Is it possible that the Chair pursue a mechanism in which positions of African group, member states and other regional groups from the global south feature prominently – either inform of written positions or statements?

We believe that through the above deliberate steps to ask more questions, this will contribute to raising awareness, encouraging meaningful participation amongst African/ global south governmental actors and foster multi-stakeholder collective contributions in ensuring a peaceful cyberspace

Lastly, we re-iterate that the respect for human rights will be achieved when state parties actively participate in the consultations of the OEWG and that they fully understand the processes and their views and positions are clear and known to other stakeholders such as civil society. This will enable stakeholders and member states to collectively contribute to ensuring laws in the cyberspace foster human rights, cyberpeace and stability.