Mister Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Belgium aligns itself with the statement by the European Union and its member states. In my national capacity I would like to highlight the following points.

First of all, Belgium strongly condemns the acts of aggression committed by Russia in Ukraine, which undermine international security and violate the UN Charter and our common principles as United Nations.

Cyber space is an area where we have seen a considerable amount of challenges to our common security in recent years and it merits our full attention.

We look forward to continuing our ever more important discussions on advancing an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace; the OEWG is an opportunity for the international community to exchange, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, on the responsible use of ICTs by States in a manner that is consistent with their international obligations.

At the same time we see Russia violating the norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. In this regard, we reaffirm our full solidarity with the Ukrainian people that are suffering. Russia needs to stop its disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.

We are troubled to hear Russia advocating again for an international treaty in cyberspace, while they are not even adhering to the norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

Consequently in the current context we cannot accept that “it is business as usual”.

We remain convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures can make an important contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in cyber space. They highlight the importance of the mutually-reinforcing role of transparency and confidence-building measures, reducing the risks of misperception, miscalculation, and unintended conflict escalation, and the need to advocate for responsible behaviour in cyber space. Belgium will continue to advocate for responsible behaviour in cyber space, as well as a comprehensive approach in addressing challenges, risks and threats to the peaceful use of cyber space, in compliance with international law, notably in the framework of the United Nations. The destruction of cyber infrastructure or interruptions of their services pose an inherent risk to connected societies increasingly dependent on these services.
We believe that International law, international humanitarian law and human rights law apply in cyberspace. In particular, let me recall that in emergency situations, such as the one we face today, everything should be done to ensure the protection of civilians, especially children. For this OEWG, this also includes our efforts to continue our ever more important discussion on advancing an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace.

The OEWG is an opportunity for the international community to exchange, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, on the responsible use of ICTs by States in a manner that is consistent with their international obligations.

In order to have meaningful discussions and deliberations we are firmly convinced that the OEWG must engage effectively with stakeholders.

In this regard Belgium highlights the importance to find a consensus on the modalities.

Let me thank you, Mister Chair, for your efforts and commitment to this process, and let me express the full solidarity of Belgium with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.