OPENING STATEMENT

Chair, I wish to make a point of order. Before I do so the UK opens its contribution to these discussions by condemning Russia’s unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack against the sovereign democratic state of Ukraine.

Much has already been said on this topic – at the Security Council, at UNGA, even in specialised agencies of the UN. So why raise it here at the OEWG?

Chair, for many years States have supported the assessment of the 2015 GGE report that the use of ICTs in future conflicts between States is becoming more likely.

We have stressed that it is in the interest of all States to prevent conflict arising from the use of information and communications technologies.

And we have expressed concern that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security.

In conflicts around the world we have begun to see the use of cyber capabilities of States.

USG Nakamitsu has highlighted the direct relevant to the work of this group. Today we see a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council with sophisticated cyber capabilities showing its true colours.

Trampling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Using cyber capabilities and information wars to undermine international peace and security.

This is the moment that we test our commitment to 23 years of discussions on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. This is the moment that we look at the framework we have developed together and ask are we upholding our commitments?

The UK is committed to our shared framework. Where States abuse the framework we will say so. Where we can do more to implement it and protect all States from malicious activity in cyberspace we will do that too.

We cannot shy away from it. This conflict is a key test for our work together. There can be no business as usual.

We stand with the Ukrainian government - and the 141 States who voted on 2 March by an overwhelming majority to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine - for freedom, democracy and the sovereignty of nations around the world.

Chair, we extend our heartfelt thanks to yourself, your team and all who have participated in our continued efforts to reach a compromise solution on the issue of modalities for
stakeholder participation in the OEWG. We regret that this issue remains outstanding and hope we will resolve it shortly. Adopting the Programme of Work would signify that all Parties have agreed modalities for this process. We therefore kindly request this agenda item remains open until we have reached that agreement. As shown in December, the UK is committed to continuing substantive discussions in the OEWG.