

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE FIRST
SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SECURITY
OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS (December 2021)**

1 June 2021 – Opening Statement

Chair

Congratulations on your election.

Australia was pleased by the success of the inaugural Open Ended Working Group in March, and the successful adoption of the report by the Group of Governmental Experts last week.

These consensus reports endorse – and build upon – the framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

Consensus is a precious commodity – and we should all be proud that, as state conduct in cyberspace becomes a strategic foreign policy issue, we continue to make substantive progress on this issue as an international community.

Australia hopes that the precedent set out in the reports of the OEWG and GGE will remain with us and provide the starting point for our work here, in this new Open-Ended Working Group.

We are not starting from scratch.

We hope this group will take, as it's foundation, the consensus report of the previous OEWG, to move forward constructively and build upon our collective agreements.

Chair – you asked for member state's opinions on the possibility of establishing thematic subgroups for our discussion.

It is important that our discussions build upon our consensus agreements – to that end, Australia proposes that, should the group agree that subgroups be established, they must follow the topics set out as chapter headings of the previous OEWG report: existing and potential threats; rules norm and principles of responsible state behaviour; international law; confidence building measures; capacity building; and regular institutional dialogue.

Australia looks forward to working constructively in this OEWG.

In the previous OEWG, despite many non-ECOSOC accredited organisations being disallowed to participate in our meeting, we had robust multistakeholder engagement

- This was purely down to the initiative of specific member states, most notably Singapore, which organised and Chaired the intersessional multistakeholder consultation in December 2019,
- and also Canada, which co-sponsored, along with Australia, the EU, and others, the virtual letstalkcyber consultation event in December 2020.

Australia remains a strong supporter of multistakeholder participation in our discussions

As the Canadian delegate noted, the multistakeholder community plays an integral role in the issues under discussion in this group, and can provide perspectives that help us better understand these issues and come to our consensus decisions, as states.

Australia therefore supports **transparent** processes for the participation of intergovernmental organisations, civil society, industry, the technical community and academia in our discussions.

And we look forward to discussing this issue further intersessionally.

This is a topic of great importance to us all, and Australia is pleased to be engaged in democratic, inclusive and transparent discussions focussed upon on fostering responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

The Chair has Australia's full support; and we stand ready to assist.

Thank you.