

## STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE SECOND SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SECURITY OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS (MARCH 2022)

### Other Business

I'd like to join with Syria in thanking you for including in our discussions this agenda item on our report. I think it is important and thank you for putting it to our notice to think about it earlier rather than later. I echo the views of many countries across the week who have said that it would be very ideal for us and our report to reflect the richness of our discussions over the past two sessions.

Also, to agree with the Netherlands we do have the *acquis* and forms the foundation of our work – it's been elaborated in the 2010, 2013 and 2015 GGE reports, in the March 2021 OEWG report and the May 2021 GGE report in reflecting this foundation and reaffirming it and elaborating further on the aspects of our framework in which we have been able to make progress is a very good start for our report.

I also agree with China on the proposed structure of the report, and it should focus on the agenda items we have been discussing, and Mexico makes a good point in the way we reflect in an objective manner the way we have been able to include multistakeholder consultations informally.

We have a few options for how this report is structured, and some have been talked about today. Australia is open to the structure that is most likely to gain consensus and I say this in the hope that this does not leave us without ambition for what this report could say. We could hopefully reflect the ideas of the proposals of our discussions, and if possible emphasise those that have garnered significant support and very much trust you to reflect this in an objective manner.

### GENDER

Want to turn to a matter of significant importance and priority for Australia.

Note with appreciation the many statements made throughout this week emphasising the importance of taking into account gender dimensions in our discussions.

In particular, I want to highlight the importance of bringing diverse voices and perspectives to our discussions, through balanced representation, including gender balance.

Last December, I took the floor under this agenda item to provide some statistics on our group, in the context of broader UN discussions and forums.

To recap briefly, the UN First Committee lags significantly behind the strides towards gender parity of delegations, including heads of delegations, and gender parity in interventions that can be seen across other committees of the UN.

UNIDIR data shows that, in First committee debates, 27% of speakers are women.

This drops to an average of 20% in forums on more specialised topics, such as cyber affairs.

In our first session in December, 37% of interventions were from women speakers - better than the average across peace and security fora.

I asked in December whether we could do better – and I am absolutely delighted to be able to leave this week with some good news for us all –

Over the course of this week's discussion, we have over 280 interventions, and over 120 of those were made by women speakers.

This equates to 43% of interventions this week being made by women speakers.

And, if we break down the statistics further, 50% of international law interventions were made by women speakers. I am very proud of those statistics, and hope we all are.

Why does this matter?

The data shows that peace deals stick better and last longer when women are included at the table. And as a wise person said during our very short lunch break, we need women leaders to build bridges.

And with the importance of our work here - that we have all recognised - to protect, promote, and progress peace and stability in cyberspace – these statistics give me some confidence that we are setting ourselves up for the best possible chance of success.

Thank you.