“Allow me Mr. Chair to first start by thanking the Governments of the UK, Ireland, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for enabling the participation of Middle Eastern Women in Cybersecurity in the 3rd substantive session of the OEWG. We believe that this level of support testifies to the keen interest, and multilateral contribution of member states to reducing gender parity in this sphere.

Under this guiding question, I would like to draw the OEWG’s attention to the role played by Fellowship programmes of the sort established and sponsored by the UK Government in achieving ground-up practical impact and to encourage this as a model that can both be encouraged and enabled by the OEWG – for example by making it easier for individuals who are active in such groups to be accredited to attend OEWG sessions.
I am founder of Jordan’s Women in Cyber Security Middle East Affiliate Group and also the Secretariat for the UK Government sponsored UK Gulf Women In Cyber Fellowship. This is a regional programme that has so far brought together more than 30 senior women in cyber security from across the Gulf. The Fellowship provides them with an opportunity to work together, as a team on meaningful projects with the underlying intent to deliver national and regional outcomes.

These projects have so far achieved:

A- Publicly available research on the cybersecurity skills shortages gap within the GCC to inform the development of needed capacity building programmes. And, the extent and nature of women’s contribution to cybersecurity across the GCC.
B- The first Arabic online portal to enhance cyber security hygiene practices targeting children, women and the elderly.

C- The promotion and encouragement of Fellows as role models within their region and globally through publicizing their achievements and promoting their contribution to international fora – including the participation of Women in Cyber Security Middle East Group (WiCSME) at this meeting of the UN.

D- The provision of general support to Women in Cyber Security Middle East ongoing initiatives and programmes to empower and support women through training, mentorship, Regional Cyber Competitions, to name just a few.

E- Support for the development of an innovation framework for a regionally focused cybersecurity innovation lab and
the provision of certified innovation training.

This Fellowship model of collaboration demonstrates a poignant example of an action-oriented, and results-focused initiative to improve gender diversity in the cyber security profession that we would like to see replicated across the Middle East, and internationally to enhance the contribution of women to national and global development efforts in cybersecurity.

In addition, I have seen at first-hand how interaction between my Jordan Women in Cyber Middle East Affiliate Group and a Cyber Security Services company within its network was able to provide two female graduates currently studying for their Cyber Security Masters degrees with the opportunity to work on a high-profile forensics case to give them the needed experience, exposure and on-
the-job training. We therefore welcome the contribution of large technology companies to offer apprenticeship schemes as part of a broader strategy for capacity building for women, to both encourage and increase their number in the cybersecurity workforce and encourage all efforts to identify those willing to offer such schemes and match them with recipients who will benefit such as my WICSME Jordan affiliate group members.

And finally, on behalf of WiCSME and UK Gulf WIC Fellows, I would like to thank the UK government and other member states, once again, for supporting WiCSME and the UK Gulf Fellowship. We ask them to bear witness to the progress made by these women in fulfilling a long-held aspiration of participation in the UN OEWG in the
security of and use of ICT in the context of international security.