



South Africa’s inputs and comments on the “Pre-draft” of the report of the OEWG on development in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the context of International Security

Inputs on introductory paragraphs:

Paragraph 8

The paragraph should more fully appreciate the growing exploitation or abuse of ICTS that hinders access to technologies and where access has established presents challenges to the full enjoyment of digital connectivity for economic and social development and the threats of insecurity of ICTs inhibits the ability of States to secure the gains already achieved.

Paragraph 9

The narrowing of the gender digital divide should take into consideration narrowing access to technology and ICTs and the disproportionate impact of abuse of ICTs on women. More broadly, the paragraph should articulate the broad consensus that participation of women in international security impacts sustainability of peace agreements and therefore the OEWG welcomes the participation of women in the discussions.

Paragraph 12

The report should articulate what is meant by human centric approach and consider these two elements;

Humans experience technology daily and in that interaction, humans should maintain control over the design, manufacture, and operationalisation of such technology and are accountable for use and abuse.

Technology and ICTs impact on humans and deliberations should consider first the safety and security of humanity as ICTs cannot be discussed in isolation to their impact on humanitarian.

1. Existing and potential threats:

The section should articulate the threats of unequal capacities to detect threats, identify vulnerabilities and withstand incidents and/ or attacks.

The section should articulate the threats of stockpiling vulnerabilities with regards to the significant number of actors including government actors, contractors and vendors as well as threat actors.

The exact threat is that the choice to not disclose vulnerabilities to vendors on time increases chances of threat actors having the same information and abusing it to harm citizens and States.

2. International law:

No inputs on international law as the Secretariat has captured South Africa's sentiments in para 29 and 32. That even though international law does not have specific reference to ICTs it can progressively develop and UN organs such as the UN Security Council and the ICJ are useful in arbitrating ICT related incidents between States.

It should be noted that the inputs on sharing national views on the applicability of international law are not prescriptive.

3. Norms for responsible State behaviour:

South Africa's sentiments are articulated with regards to the relation between norms and international law.

Input: Proposals on additional norms should also provide background on the corresponding regulations and standards that will assist Member States in implementation. If none exist, proposals should note the lacunae.

4. Confidence building measures

Noting that confidence building measures includes sharing national views on cybersecurity and domestic measures, exchanges within the SADC and AU under various structures including STC on ICTs and infrastructure untrue can serve as CBMs. However, none of the aforementioned structures categorize such exchanges as CBMs.

South Africa is happy with the articulation that regional and sub regional organizations have an important role to play in CBMs especially the exchange of national points of contact on the diplomatic, legal, technical and policy levels. The input on the need for CBMs to be implemented in other forums is also accurate and acceptable.

5. Capacity building

South Africa is satisfied with the inputs as they articulate the comprehensive usefulness of capacity building for Member States. South - South and train Gaul are cooperation on capacity building is also welcome.

South Africa and other Member States linked the discussions on capacity building to WPS which is articulated well.

6. Regular institutional dialogue

South Africa indicated its support for dialogue within existing resources but remains open to the establishment of an institution that can facilitate the ongoing exchanges between member states with a view to rationalising the gaps that exist in international law and the avenues to mitigate them.

The report should reflect that the OEWG is a form of regular institutional dialogue and the mandate renewal for several iterations may be sufficient to fulfil Member States' call for something under the UN auspices. The OEWG was referred to as the General Assembly on ICTs security issues.

General remarks and recommendations

The report should note the appropriation of terms and concepts and articulate the meaning in context

- Human centric approach
- Stockpiling of vulnerabilities

South Africa is satisfied with the recommendations made in the report.