

Statement by Turkey

Informal Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (19 February 2021)

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for your valuable efforts to steer the work of this Open-ended Working Group despite the ongoing difficulties due to the pandemic.

We also thank you for the zero draft. We find it balanced and comprehensive as it reflects the discussions we have had so far within OEWG.

In our view, the draft report provides a good basis to further our discussions in the lead up to the third substantive session.

We support your approach which focuses on elements that are most likely to garner the consensus support. This is clearly reflected in the report.

We appreciate the fact that the report has been streamlined and better structured compared to the previous versions.

It is important that we continue to preserve the spirit of consensus because we think that is the best way for progress and to ensure ownership and eventually, better implementation of the recommendations of this Group.

We welcome the general emphasis on the ‘voluntary’ nature of the recommendations that are contained in the report.

Concerning specific paragraphs, I would like to state the following:

-In para 12, whereby there is a reference to ‘the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes,’ we think we could make that reference from a broader perspective, and could say ‘the use of ICTs for terrorist purposes,’ instead of limiting this phenomenon to the Internet. We think this would be more compatible with other parts of the report as well.

-Concerning para 86, about the recommendations on capacity building, under the sub-heading ‘Process and Purpose’, it is recommended that capacity building activities be undertaken without conditions. Although we recognize the logic of this wording and share the goal of effective capacity building assistance to the developing countries and the LDCs, we still think there could be a more flexible formulation here, as the para relates to the general principles of capacity-building. We therefore propose using “should be realized without conditionality,” instead of “without conditions.”

-As to para 107, regarding regular institutional dialogue, we welcome the recognition of the need to keep the discussions of the OEWG focused on international peace and security and the stress on avoidance of duplication with other UN mandates, efforts and activities, including those issues such as terrorism, crime, developments, human rights and Internet governance.

-Lastly, I join other colleagues who requested that the proposal for the establishment of a national survey of implementation be reflected in the final version of the report. Turkey welcomes and supports this proposal by Australia and Mexico, which is clearly supported and sponsored by a number of states, as we have seen also during the interventions yesterday. We believe that the survey could be instrumental in achieving multiple goals of the OEWG, especially in the fields of information sharing about capacity building.

On procedural matters, we understand the current difficulties concerning holding a full-fledged substantive session in March and we are flexible regarding the hybrid model or a postponement. That said, we also have concerns regarding the postponement of this session to the end of August, as it would coincide with the NPT Review Conference.

We would like assure you of our cooperation to finalize our work.

We will share the written version of this intervention for ease of reference.

Thank you.