

## **Sweden's comments at the OEWG informal, February 21, 2021**

Ambassador Lauber, we would like to express Sweden's appreciation to you and your team for your excellent and dedicated work. We appreciate the inclusive and consensus-oriented approach taken so far and believe these informal meetings have contributed significantly to the progress.

We align ourselves with the statement by the European Union and its Member States and would like to make a few further comments.

Sweden believed the Zero Draft accurately reflects discussions in this group and should be the basis for the process going forward. The introduction of an alternative text would detract from this group's inclusiveness, not least for the many countries participating in this process for the first time. Instead, we believe the text should, as is the case here, accurately reflect discussion, including disagreements, to help shape the agenda for further conversations.

In line with many previous speakers, we believe it is essential to reaffirm and build upon the *acquis* in the section on international law. The 2013 and 2015 GGE reports form the basis for the current international consensus, which could be more strongly reflected in the text. We believe the current outline accurately underlines the foundational role of international law and the complementary role of norms of responsible state behavior.

Sweden is a strong friend of the United Nations. We are reliant on the interconnections we have with our neighbours and partners. Strong multilateral institutions and a rules-based international order are of utmost importance to us. The United Nations is the core of multilateral cooperation. It is crucial in establishing norms, tackling global challenges and promoting collaboration.

The technological changes that are now reshaping our world require action and innovation also in multilateral cooperation. Sweden agrees with those speakers who, rightly, have pointed out the importance of the section on a regular institutional dialogue.

We believe there needs to be recurrent and structured discussion under the UN's auspices on these issues.

We note that some worry that the initiative to establish a Program of Action (PoA) – now supported by 48 states – would, somehow, be a way to undermine rather than strengthen discussions in the UN.

As a strong friend of the UN and the multilateral order, let me underline the contrary: the establishment of a PoA represents the best opportunity on the table to make concrete progress on substance rather than form and to ensure inclusive and constructive discussions in the years to come. The PoA would harness the convening power of the UN and ensure open and inclusive discussions.

Thank you, Chair.