

## **UN Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting: Cyber Stability, Conflict Prevention and Capacity Building**

22 May 2020, 10am-1pm USEST

### **Remarks by Australia's Ambassador for Cyber Affairs [422 words]**

Thank you Chair.

State activities in cyberspace have a direct impact on international peace and security.

We commend Estonia for bringing this issue to the attention of the Security Council.

Every UN Member State has agreed that existing international law applies in cyberspace.

Member States have also endorsed 11 norms of responsible state behaviour, as well as recommendations to build trust and confidence, and expand capacity building efforts.

Despite this, we continue to see malicious cyber activity increase in scale and sophistication.

Australia is particularly concerned by reports that malicious cyber actors are seeking to damage or impair health infrastructure and crisis response organisations during COVID-19.

Let me be clear: this behaviour is unacceptable.

Some argue that we need more – or new – rules. That cyberspace continues to be the Wild West. Where malicious actors can act with impunity.

We question the motivations of those perpetuating this myth.

What we need is not more – or new – rules, but adherence to the rules we have already agreed, and greater accountability when they are broken.

Australia reaffirms our commitment to act in accordance with the recommendations of the 2015 UN Group of Governmental Experts, as endorsed by the General Assembly – and we call on all countries to do the same.

Australia is active in the two concurrent UN Processes – the GGE and OEWG – considering how we can build upon the 2015 consensus.

With Mexico and 24 other countries, Australia was pleased to submit a proposal to the OEWG to establish a Survey of National Implementation of the 2015 recommendations.

We were also pleased to submit a joint proposal on how the OEWG Report might best address unacceptable COVID-19 related cyber activity.

We invite all countries to join in supporting these important initiatives.

Australia, along with the UK, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Canada – was also delighted to initiate a Women In Cyber Fellowship, which at the OEWG meeting in February - for the first time in the UN 75 year history - saw gender parity in interventions made in a formal First Committee meeting.

Chair

Australia is committed to promoting and protecting the international rules based order online, just as we do offline – be this through our:

- work at the UN,
- efforts regionally and bilaterally to build trust and confidence,
- our \$35 million cyber capacity building program, or
- development of a new Australian Cyber and Critical Technology International Engagement Strategy.

Cyber and critical technology issues are strategic foreign policy issues – and it is vital that they are treated as such by the international community.

Thank you.