STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SECURITY OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS (DECEMBER 2022)

Point of Contact (PoC)

Thank you chair, Australia was grateful to join the cross-regional group and the statement this morning, so I will do my best to abridge my remarks so we can hear from more delegations.

Thank you to United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for your work on the Point of Contact (PoC) survey - Australia completed this last week and benefited from considering the details we saw this morning, and encourage others to do so to ensure all countries' views are heard.

Australia reaffirms its support for a global PoC directory, as an essential component to implementing the UN norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, and a crucial risk reduction and confidence building measure (CBM).

Australia acknowledges and commends the significant work already completed at the regional level to develop PoC directories, including the ARF, OAS, and OSCE. We should learn from these regional efforts, some of which have gone years before us. This includes nominating existing regional PoCs as contact points to the global directory where possible (many States have shared that view today).

At the same time as recognising the success of regional directory initiatives, we acknowledge that many countries remain out of these initiatives, and should not be disadvantaged by the benefits a PoC directory provides, that is where the global PoC directory comes in.

Australia views enabling greater communication as a core role - and strength - of a PoC directory.

Trust is essential for countries to participate in and use the directory system. To this end, Australia supports measures to test its functionality and to provide a platform to consider additional CBMs:
- Regular or biannual communication checks
- Countries should provide the administrative body with updates regarding their PoC details on a regular basis, and on an ad hoc basis as required. Providing this information should be voluntary.
- Exchange of best practices and lessons from the regional level, to support implementation and operationalisation of PoCs.

With one more point to consider with respect to the point made this morning from the UK:
Australia is a longstanding and vocal supporter of capacity building to ensure all states are in a position to implement and adhere to the framework of responsible state behavior: to make progress towards a more open, secure, stable and peaceful cyberspace, and to be in a position to address the known and unknown threats that our global community will face in the future.

However, we don't believe that a dedicated capacity building program should be a prerequisite for establishing a global point of contact directory. Any capacity building program should be consistent with and promote the principles for capacity building agreed by the 2021 Open Ended Working Group (OEWG). We don't think the directory should be a 24/7 network or incident response mechanism. But rather, it offers an appropriate entry point into the contacts which would be relevant to this to provide and exchange information.

Some assistance may indeed be required for States to access and implement the directory, especially those that are currently not in a regional PoC directory, to prepare them to do such - and in that instance, to your question about gradual approach - that is building each State's capacity to enter the community of States in the PoC directory, we should consider a step by step approach in that sense. But capacity building need not, and should not, preclude the directory's

establishment.

We look forward to continuing the important discussions throughout the week.