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Statement by Mr. Sasun Hovhannisyan, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations

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Mr. Chair,

At the outset, our delegation would like to thank you for your leadership in steering the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021- 2025. We also thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her introductory remarks.

Development of the ICTs is becoming critical for the well-being of humanity and promotion of peace, sustainable development and human rights. Armenia is firmly committed to a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace. We support the efforts within the framework of the UN aimed at mitigating the risks and counter the threats stemming from the use of information and communication technologies, promoting rules and norms for responsible State behavior and confidence-building measures.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment, reflected in his report on "Our Common Agenda" that the complex digital issues can include application of human rights online and accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content.

Digital technologies provide new means to advocate, defend and exercise human rights, but they can also be used to suppress, limit and violate human rights. Hence, it is important not to overlook the implications of the malicious use of ICTs for the enjoyment of human rights, in particular the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

ICTs can also be utilized to incite discrimination, identity-based hate and spread misinformation, extremist ideologies and violent practices, particularly on social media platforms. Growing use of cyberspace to disseminate racism, xenophobia and instigate violence and hate crimes on ethnic and religious grounds, in particular when promoted at state level constitutes a dangerous trend, which, if not addressed, can lead to grave breaches of the international humanitarian law and the international human rights law.

The nature of threats on ICT domain requires innovative and forward-looking responses, which should be based on broad partnership between member states, international organizations, private sector, civil society and academia.

Voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour can reduce risks to international peace, security and stability and play an important role in increasing predictability and reducing risks of misperceptions, thus contributing to the prevention of escalation of conflict. Armenia supports the activities of the Open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, as an inclusive and transparent platform for advancing the dialogue on implementation of the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.