

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

**Working paper of the Islamic Republic of Iran on
“provisional operationalization of the POC directory”**

(May 22, 2023)

Background:

Since the adoption of the first annual progress report of the OEWG, States have engaged in a series of formal and informal focused discussions on the development of such a directory that have been convened over the past year by the chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG). This includes the productive and substantive exchanges of views within the:

- Informal inter-sessional meetings from 5 to 9 December 2022;
- Fourth substantive session of the OEWG from 6 to 10 March 2023;
- Virtual open-ended informal meeting on 25 April 2023; and
- The current informal inter-sessional meetings from 23 to 26 May 2023.

A background information paper and a survey on the points of contact directory have also been prepared by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) respectively.

Insufficient practical information on the POC directory:

Statements made by Member States within the past year's meetings of the OEWG as well as the background information paper of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the UNIDIR survey on POC indicate that there is insufficient information and experience, even among countries that are members of regional organizations undertaking such work, about the practical aspects of POC directory which involve real situations and events, rather than just ideas and theories.

Insufficient information and experience on the POC directory are somehow reflected in the preliminary findings of the UNIDIR survey on Points of Contact. The introduction section of the Survey acknowledged clearly that there is no indication of how a cyber PoC network should work, and no studies or analyses on PoC networks exist.

During the virtual open-ended informal meeting on the topic of the global, inter-governmental Points of Contact directory (POC directory) which was held by the chair of the OEWG on 25 April 2023 with the participation of representatives of regional POC directories, useful theoretical information was presented but practical aspects of the POC directory were insufficiently explained and elaborated.

Provisional operationalization of the POC directory:

It is clear that before proceeding to establish a global, intergovernmental, points of contact directory on security in the use of ICTs, States need more time for discussions, to delve deeper into practical aspects of the POC directory, and have a clear understanding of this important mechanism. POC directory needs further study, clarification, and elaboration if it is to be established as a confidence-building measure that could help to increase transparency and predictability while supporting a peaceful information and communications technologies environment and the peaceful resolution of disputes arising from the use of such technologies.

Therefore, at this stage of discussions, it would be premature to decide to establish a global, intergovernmental POC directory permanently. Instead, the OEWG may agree to establish and operationalize a provisional POC directory at the time of the conclusion of the fifth substantive session of the OEWG in July 2023.

The need for capacity building, especially for developing countries, has been indicated in the APR's recommendation for States to "engage in discussions on initiatives for related capacity-building" concerning the POC directory and has been reflected in the non-paper prepared by the Chair of the OEWG, is also an important element which can be achieved to some extent during the provisional period of the POC directory functioning.

Following the provisional operationalization of the directory, States may review the operation of the POC directory at the forthcoming sessions of the OEWG and

consider the possibility for replace the provisional POC directory with a permanent one at the final report of the OEWG.