Dear Colleagues,

I have the honour of addressing you in my capacity as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG), established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/240 adopted on 31 December 2020.

Ahead of the fourth substantive session of the OEWG taking place from 6 to 10 March 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York (UNHQ), I am pleased to invite interested stakeholders, including businesses, non-governmental organizations and academia, to an informal dialogue on Wednesday 1 March 2023, from 08:30 – 11:30 am EST (New York local time) via Microsoft Teams. The connection link will be conveyed to registered participants in due course.

I am convening this informal dialogue in my capacity as Chair of the OEWG as part of my commitment to continue engaging with stakeholders, and to encourage continued interaction between the stakeholder community and States. This latest informal dialogue builds on the series of focused dialogues between Member States and stakeholders that I have convened over the course of the past year. This includes the productive and substantive exchanges of views we had on the topic of capacity-building in March and July 2022, as well as on the topic of confidence-building in December 2022.

As we make progress on delivering concrete outcomes at the OEWG, your views and ideas continue to be of much value, and we look forward to hearing them at the informal dialogue. For this dialogue, it is my intention to focus our discussions on the topic of existing and potential threats in the field of ICT security. Specifically, I invite stakeholders to be guided by the following questions:
• What new and emerging technologies can potentially be exploited for malicious ICT activity? Which are being used most extensively currently and which pose the greatest risks to international peace and security?

• Are there also any specific technical developments in the field of ICT security (e.g. proliferation of marketplaces for zero-day exploits, systemic effects of vulnerabilities in widely used open-source software) that could potentially pose risks to international peace and security?

• How can stakeholders work together with the international community to develop a deeper understanding of the potential risks to international peace and security posed by these new and emerging vectors and vulnerabilities?

• What concrete, specific initiatives can States and/or stakeholders undertake within the framework of the OEWG to mitigate the impact of these new and emerging vectors and vulnerabilities on international peace and security? What immediate capacities do States have to build to have basic defense against these vectors and vulnerabilities?

I look forward to a substantive discussion informed by the valuable experiences, expertise and research of the stakeholder community, which is routinely on the frontlines with regard to the identification and mitigation of ICT security threats. It is my hope that this discussion will result in specific technical suggestions on this topic which can be captured as areas of convergence in the next Annual Progress Report.

In order to ensure the most productive use of our meeting time, I urge all speakers to focus their interventions on directly addressing the guiding questions. I would also encourage you to organise yourselves in groups or coalitions focussed on supporting specific proposals or themes and that could speak as a group on your behalf. The registration details are enclosed. I also encourage you to send any written input to cyberOEWGChair@gmail.com and prizeman@un.org, to be made available on the dedicated OEWG webpage (https://meetings.unoda.org/open-ended-working-group-information-and-communication-technologies-2021).
I look forward to a substantive and productive engagement with you.

Burhan Gafoor
Chair
Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025

Enclosure:

• Annex A – Registration Details
REGISTRATION DETAILS

If you wish to participate in the informal dialogue on 1 March 2023, please register at the Microsoft Forms link provided below no later than 6pm (New York local time) on Friday, 24 February 2023. Each participant should register individually at the following link: https://forms.office.com/e/r4BTu27ZR8. Confirmed participants will receive login details prior to the meeting.

Additional Information

More information on the OEWG 2021-2025 can be found at the UNODA Meetings Place.

Specific queries may be directed to Ms. Katherine Prizeman, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, prizeman@un.org.