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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations, and with reference to ODA/2024-00017/ICT Points of Contact Capacities Report dated 27 February 2024, has the honor to submit the attached views of the Republic of the Philippines on capacities required to participate in the Points of Contact directory, including views on capacity-building experiences drawn from participating in other directories pursuant to the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/265.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York
14 March 2024

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Attention: Office for Disarmament Affairs
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Views of the Republic of the Philippines on the capacities required to participate in the Open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG on ICT 2021-2025) Points of Contact Directory, including views on capacity-building experiences drawn from participating in other directories

The Philippines highly supports the establishment and operationalization of the Points of Contact (POC) directory of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies 2021-2025. In this line, the Philippines provides its experience, both challenges and opportunities, faced in the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Point of Contact (PoC) Directory on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).

<u>Challenges</u>

- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date information within directories poses a significant challenge due to dynamic nature of government personnel and their contact details. Regular updates and verification processes are necessary to ensure data accuracy.
- No effective coordination schemes at the national level among different PoCs.
- There is a lack of awareness of the concerned agency/department on roles and responsibilities of being nominated as one of the PoCs. There is a need to establish effective coordination schemes at the national level among different PoC (Diplomatic ⇔ National Security and Policy Coordination ⇔ Enforcement ⇔ Technical). This is for effective communication in responding issues at hand.
- Achieving consistency and standardization across directories from different member countries may arise, particularly concerning data privacy and cybersecurity. Robust security measures must be in place to safeguard sensitive government personnel details;
- Security concerns surrounding the storage and sharing of contact information among member countries may arise, particularly concerning data privacy and cybersecurity. Robust security measures must be in place to safeguard sensitive government personnel details.
- Inadequate technological infrastructure, including internet connectivity and cybersecurity measures, in some member countries may hinder the effective operation of online directories. Investment in infrastructure is crucial to overcoming these challenges.
- Language barriers and cultural differences may impede effective communication and collaboration among member countries when updating and utilizing the directories. Multilingual support and cross-cultural training initiatives can help address these barriers.
- While "ping tests" have been conducted to test the activeness of e-mail addresses list in the PoC Directory, more proactive approach to respond to an actual ICT incident is needed. This proactive approve may include table-top exercises.

<u>Opportunities</u>

- The ARF PoC directories provide an opportunity to enhance communication and cooperation among member countries on regional security issues, fostering closer ties and mutual understanding.
- Accessible contact information for key officials enables swift communication and coordination in response to security challenges, such as natural disasters or terrorist threats, enhancing regional security resilience.
- Collaborative efforts to maintain and update the directories serve as a platform for capacity-building and knowledge-sharing among member countries, particularly in areas related to data management and cybersecurity.
- Integration of the directories with existing regional security platforms and databases can streamline information sharing and enhance interoperability among member countries, improving overall efficiency and effectiveness.
- Transparent and accessible directories contribute to greater transparency and accountability in regional security cooperation efforts, fostering trust among member countries and stakeholders.

Addressing these challenges and leveraging the opportunities presented by the ARF PoC directories is essential in advancing regional cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member countries. In the same line, OEWG on ICT 2021-2025 POC Directory can learn from these challenges and opportunities to better facilitate the establishment and operationalization of the directory.

Integration of training sessions or seminars can also be integrated into the POC directory initiative. These trainings are intended to deepen the knowledge and expertise of ARF members in the realm of securing and managing ICT resources and assets deployed across various government agencies within their respective nations. The overall goal is to fortify our shared commitment to safeguarding data and information systems with utmost effectiveness.