France contribution to the United Nations Secretariat's initial background paper on the ICT Points of Contact Directory

The increasing digitization of societies since the end of the 20th century has contributed to the development of the opportunities offered by cyberspace and, at the same time, to the emergence of new threats. The continued expansion of this space and its attack surfaces gives state and non-state malicious actors new and cheap opportunities to conduct criminal, espionage, destabilization and/or disruptive operations.

Faced with this threat, in parallel with the efforts being made to strengthen the nation's cybersecurity, France is committed to help strengthening the cyber resilience of its international partners. Alongside necessary cyber capacity building activities, building security in cyberspace at global level requires building trust across UN Member States.

In this context, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 78/16 on the Programme of Action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs in the context of international security. Tabled by Colombia, France and the United States, this resolution obtained 161 votes in favor of establishing a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented mechanism, upon the conclusion of the 2021-2025 OEWG and no later than 2026. Among the specific objectives of this permanent and action-oriented mechanism will be to support States in the implementation of the framework for responsible behaviour, including through capacity building and the facilitation of communication channels with the continued implementation of the UN ICT Points of Contact Directory initiated by the OEWG 2021-2025.

Pursuant to its 2022 contribution entitled "France's views on the establishment of a global cyber points of contact (PoC) directory" and pursuant to the request of paragraph 13(b) of the Annex contained in A/78/265 entitled "Progress report on the discussions of the working group on agenda item 5", France would like to share lessons learnt from the use of point of contact systems at the regional level.

As an OSCE participating State, France is participating to the OSCE Point of Contact Network. Although OSCE participating States are still in the process of making the best use of this communication channel, some lessons can be drawn from recent uses of the OSCE POC Network and apply to the question of the capacities required to participate to a Points of Contact directory in the context of operationalizing the UN ICT Points of Contact Directory:

- **As cybersecurity-related information is often at the crossroad between the policy and technical levels in the context of the United Nations, France commends the designation of one national technical POC and one national policy POC**. This articulation revealed itself useful in the context of the OSCE.

- **The transparency of the technical functioning of the UN ICT Point of Contact Directory will be key to ensure a good level of understanding, trustworthiness and appropriation**. In this regard, the system should ensure the confidentiality of information by design.

- **In order to ensure an efficient use of the UN ICT Points of Contact Directory, guidelines could be provided to UN Member States' technical and policy points of contact on how to best use this tool in the long term**. The sustainability of the Points of Contact Directory relies on its ability to stay relevant for the UN Member States' needs. France recommends to use it inter alia in the context of cyber incident response solicitations. On the contrary, UN Member States should refrain from using it to share information not directly related to cyber incidents.