

Statement by South Africa on rules, norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace at the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025), 5 March 2024, United Nations, New York

Chairperson,

For this segment of our work, you asked us to reflect on five guiding questions and we are pleased to share our thoughts on some of these questions:

On the question of possible additional norms that could potentially complement existing norms, South Africa has maintained that additional norms could be developed by considering gaps identified through the process of implementing those norms. It became very clear during the discussion on threats that despite the many benefits emerging technologies such as AI bring, the associated risks are twofold. Thus, the South African delegation could support a new norm to protect against AI powered cyber operations and attacks on AI systems to complement existing norms as proposed during the multi-stakeholder consultation last week.

Chairperson,

Turning to the question on measures to be taken to protect critical infrastructure (CI) and critical information infrastructure (CII) from ICT threats, we would suggest that at a minimum, the basics of cyber hygiene should be in place and this includes simple measures such as strong passwords, software updates, turning on multi-factor authentication and so forth. The next step is to ensure that security is built into the design and manufacture of technology products, i.e. security by design and default.

On strengthening cooperation to ensure the integrity of the supply chain and prevent the use of harmful hidden functions, we call upon States to strive for shared principles and avoid competition.

The South African delegation is still studying the *Chair's Discussion Paper on a Checklist of Practical Actions for the Implementation of Voluntary, Non-binding Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in the use of ICTs* and we would like to return to this at a later date to share our views.

Thank you.

~~~~~