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S T A T E M E N T

**BY THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION AT THE SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE UN OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP
ON SECURITY OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS 2021-2025**

New York, 5 March 2024

Mr. Chair,

The mandate of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) approved by all UN Member States tasks us to continue, as a priority, developing rules, norms and principles of responsible behavior of States in information space. We consider it imperative to strictly follow this guideline. In our view, unjustified bias in favor of implementing only the existing list of voluntary, non-binding rules of behavior – either during discussions or in the outcome documents of the OEWG – represents a distortion of the Group’s mandate.

In this context, we would like to comment on the Chair’s paper on a checklist for norms implementation. To begin with, it is regrettable that this document – quite voluminous and new in many substantive aspects – was presented for consideration just one week before the session, and, on top of that, in English that is not an official language for Russia and many other UN Member States. Such an approach does not allow us to analyze it in a comprehensive manner taking into account the assessments of competent authorities and present a well-elaborated official position on this issue. We strongly recommend the Chair to circulate such papers well in advance, at least 2-3 weeks before the event and not to put delegations under artificial time pressure.

Regarding the document itself, we see the above-mentioned bias in favor of norms implementation. Moreover, it is unclear why the initial set of international rules of responsible behavior enshrined in the UNGA resolution 73/27 was ignored. We insist on launching an equally substantive discussion on developing new norms, especially since States have made a number of proposals in this regard. In particular, we should return to the consideration of relevant national contributions set out in the 2019-2021 OEWG Chair’s summary.

Russia and a number of other countries have consistently advocated for the need to agree upon a comprehensive universal set of rules, norms and principles of

responsible behavior and make them legally binding. In concrete terms, we suggest the following new norms for consideration:

1) the sovereign right of each State to ensure security of its national information space, as well as to establish norms and mechanisms for governance in its information space in accordance with national legislation (*A/RES/73/27, PP 16, 18; A/RES/75/240, PP 17, 19*);

2) prevention of the use of ICTs with a view to undermining and infringing upon the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States (*2021 OEWG Chair's summary, A/75/816, para 20; 2021 GGE Report, A/76/135, para 70*), as well as to interfering in internal affairs of sovereign States (*2015 GGE report, A/70/174, para 71 (c); contributions of Iran and China to the 2021 OEWG Chair's summary, A/75/816; SCO International code of conduct for information security, A/69/723, para 3*);

3) inadmissibility of unsubstantiated accusations brought against States of organizing and committing wrongful acts with the use of ICTs, including computer attacks, followed by the imposition of various restrictions, such as sanctions and other response measures (*2021 OEWG Chair's summary, A/75/816, para 15; 2021 GGE Report, A/76/135, para 71 (g); 2015 GGE report, A/70/174, para 28 (f)*);

4) settlement of interstate conflicts through negotiations, mediation, reconciliation, or other peaceful means of State's choice, including through consultations with participation of competent national authorities of States (*2021 GGE report, A/75/816, para 35*).

These norms are derived from the concept of a UN Convention on International Information Security, which Russia, together with a group of States, presented at the beginning of 2023 – to the OEWG and as an official document of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. The document is intended to promote the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts and the exclusively peaceful use of ICTs, as well as to serve as a basis for cooperation between States for these purposes. We look forward

to a constructive discussion of our initiative in the OEWG on an equal footing with other proposals of States. We assume that any forms of reporting on norms implementation should be linked to the elaboration of relevant legal obligations.

Thank you for your attention.