

**South African Statement on Agenda Item 5 “Further develop the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States and the ways for their implementation and, if necessary, to introduce changes to them or elaborate additional rules of behaviour,” at the 4<sup>th</sup> Substantive Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025**

**7 March 2023**

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Thank you, Chairperson.

South Africa believes that maintaining international peace and security in cyberspace is a collective responsibility. We believe that States should use the existing 11 Rules, Norms and Principles of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in their current incarnation while we consider the possibility of a broader Programme of Action (PoA).

We agree with the first OEWG Chair’s Summary, which was included in the 2021 OEWG report, that there is a need to promote awareness of the existing norms and to support their operationalisation. This is one aspect that in our view can help move our work a step forward through socialisation of the voluntary norms for more States to partake in their implementation, thus making the framework universal.

We should pursue regular information sharing between States on their experiences in implementing the Rules, Norms and Principles of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace. As a practical step, States that are already at advanced stages of implementation can be encouraged, on a voluntary basis, to document and share lessons learnt to assist those who are yet to commence with implementation to avoid pitfalls and speed up the process.

Chairperson,

The proposal for an implementation roadmap developed by States could be beneficial in guiding those who are considering implementation on where to start. Without a roadmap, the task can be daunting and slow in progress. As mentioned earlier, the idea of a voluntary survey for the sharing of lessons and good practices can be pursued in an endeavour to assist States who are willing to implement the norms but find the task overwhelming in the absence of guidance and the necessary capacity.

The development of new norms should not detract from the implementation of existing norms. The further development of norms, rules and principles should be understood as a process of evaluating, updating where necessary, and refining rather than seeking to develop a completely new set of norms.

Thank you.