Statement by Estonia at inter-sessional meeting of

the 2021-2025 UN Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

Discussion under the Thematic Session on Capacity Building,

8 December 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor.

Dear colleagues,

Estonia regards cyber capacity building as a priority area in order to improve the overall resilience of countries against malicious cyber activities and allow to implement the recommendations reached at the UN level. Capacity building is a key part of our national cyber diplomacy policy, which is why we remain committed and open to sharing our knowledge and experiences.

Estonia supports and continues to substantiate the use of the principles of capacity building adopted in the 2021 final report of the OEWG. States need to mainstream these principles in all capacity building efforts – including in all national, regional and international formats and platforms.

Estonia contributes to a number of multilateral cyber capacity building initiatives, such as the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, the World Bank's Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund, various European Union initiatives, such as EU CyberNet, Cyber 4 Development, as well as national initiatives. We see that effective capacity building can be carried out only if we make a continuous and conscious effort to coordinate and collaborate. There is a need to improve information exchange on existing activities, including lessons learned and best practises. We also need to pool our resources and avoid duplicating our efforts, especially in a setting where current demand for further projects and initiatives exceeds the supply.

When it comes to capacity-building projects, it is important to engage recipient countries in the early stages of the activities to identify the exact needs of the country and to build local ownership, which in turn ensures the sustainability of capacity-building efforts.

Estonia's focus is on the Russian aggression in Ukraine and our top priority is assisting Ukraine as much as possible in order for Ukraine to win this war – including through our capacity building efforts. However, this does not mean that we do not pay attention to the capacity building needs of other regions. This is why Estonia is also conducting capacity building projects globally through the Estonian development cooperation agency EstDev, for example:

- the Initiative for Digital Government and Cybersecurity in Horn of Africa countries, like Kenya, Dijbouti and Somalia together with GIZ;
- Leading Innovative Future Together project in Uganda;
- Building transparent future for rural communities via Digitalisation in Kyrgystan together with the European Commission; and
- through the Estonian Information System Authority supporting the work of the Latin America and the Caribbean Cyber Competence Centre (LAC4).

In addition, Estonia has organised several multilateral capacity-building events on cyber diplomacy, such as Tallinn Summer and Winter Schools of Cyber Diplomacy; on international law, such as workshops on International Law and Cyber operations; and exercises for operational, political and legal experts, such as the Cyber Coalition cyber defence exercise. Estonia is currently working on organising the next Tallinn Summer School of Cyber Diplomacy, in which we intend to have a diverse group of participants, with a special attention to the Global South countries.

Thank you, Mr Chair.