Virtual Dialogue on Implementation of the Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation

“Artificial Intelligence, Global Digital Cooperation, Digital Trust and Security & Other Key Issues”

Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

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His Excellency Ambassador Koster,
His Excellency Ambassador Amorin,
Fellow Speakers,

Under-Secretary-General Hochschild,

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very glad to be providing some brief remarks today in recognition of the launch and implementation of the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap on Digital Cooperation. I have been very heartened and impressed by the engagement of States, private sector, civil society and academia every step of the way in this process, from the development of the report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to now the issuance of the Roadmap.

The impact of technology is two-fold. On one hand, technological innovation provides us with overwhelming benefits. On the other hand, the potential for the misuse of technology is of increasing concern.

As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, I am particularly concerned with the use of technologies as it impacts peace and security.

In 2015, a nascent normative framework was accepted by the General Assembly on the use of information and communication technologies, or ICTs, in the context of international security. This nascent framework includes that international law applies in the use of ICTs; and consists of voluntary, non-binding norms on responsible State behaviour and practical measures for confidence-building and capacity-building. This framework, which guides action of the international community, is now being further developed and built upon through two processes within the UN: The Open-ended Working Group and a new Group of Governmental Experts.
Although it is of course vital, safeguarding the digital space is not only about international security. Digital technologies increasingly impact every aspect of our lives, and therefore making cyberspace more secure is also about safeguarding human rights, promoting safety, human security and sustainable development.

The message of a secure and safer cyberspace in every aspect, and that is the benefit and responsibility of all, needs to continue to grow and reverberate.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to highlight the proposal to develop a universal statement in support of Digital Trust and Security in the Secretary-General’s Roadmap. Such a statement would reinforce our common commitments to, in partnership with all, work together to implement a shared vision for digital cooperation based on global values, and fulfill to the Sustainable Development Goals.

If there is one lesson to be learned from the current COVID-19 crisis, it is that more than ever, we need to take concerted, coordinated, multi-stakeholder action. We can only beat the pandemic, and we can only effectively ensure a safe and secure digital realm, if we do so collectively by implementing our commitments, building mutual trust and raising each other’s capacities.

I thank you very much.