New York, 16.07.2020

Excellency,

I have the honour of addressing you in my capacity as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security ("OEWG").

As I announced in my closing remarks at our last informal virtual meeting on Thursday, 2 July 2020, I am hereby providing you with a new roadmap to allow the Group to successfully conclude its work despite the obstacles imposed upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have taken note of the concerns some delegations have expressed regarding our ability to report to the 75th session of the General Assembly as per the mandate. While a postponement of the third substantive session of the OEWG may mean that we would not be able to report to the First Committee session this year, I have been informed by the Secretariat that the OEWG report could still be considered at the plenary session of the 75th session of the General Assembly in 2021, as Member States have the right to request for an agenda item under consideration by the General Assembly to be opened during the plenary session and for action to be initiated on that agenda item.

Considering this possibility, I have prepared a new roadmap for the Group to conclude its work in a timely and efficient manner. The new work plan foresees that the Group completes its informal meetings on the revised pre-draft before the end of the year. Based on our discussions at these informal meetings, I will prepare and distribute the Zero Draft by early 2021, to give delegations ample time to prepare for our third and final substantive session which is tentatively scheduled for March 2021. Please find the key dates of our roadmap in the Annex to this letter.

I am aware of the challenges some delegations are facing with regard to the schedule of our meetings and I am grateful for the flexibility you have shown so far.

In order to address concerns by some delegations on the format of our meetings, I will try, to the extent possible, to move from virtual to hybrid meetings, allowing delegations the flexibility to join either in person or virtually. Obviously the actual format of each of our forthcoming meetings will depend on the general health situation and the subsequent rules and practice decided by the competent authorities with regard to the work of the General Assembly. If necessary, we shall revisit the current plan for our work. The health and safety of delegations and Secretariat staff must remain our priority.

I am grateful for the comments, statements and contributions I received so far through our discussions as well as in written format. I encourage delegations to use the upcoming meetings to make proposals which are specific, enable the Group to make progress in addressing the remaining open issues, and are likely to generate consensus.
As with our last round of informal meetings in advance of each meeting, I will send you a number of questions I invite delegations to consider addressing in their interventions.

I wish you all a restful summer break and look forward to the continuation of our important work.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Jürg Lauber  
Ambassador  
Chair of the Open-ended Working Group
Annex - Roadmap for the work of the OEWG revised due to COVID-19

- 2nd round of informal meetings
  o Format: virtual or hybrid
  o Agenda
    ▪ International Law
  o Dates
    ▪ Tuesday, 29 September, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Wednesday, 30 September, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Thursday, 1 October, 8-11 am EDT

- 3rd round of informal meetings
  o Format: virtual or hybrid
  o Agenda
    ▪ confidence-building measures
    ▪ capacity-building
  o Dates
    ▪ Tuesday, 17 November, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Wednesday, 18 November, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Thursday, 19 November, 8-11 am EDT

- 4th round of informal meetings
  o Format: virtual or hybrid
  o Agenda
    ▪ Regular Institutional Dialogue
    ▪ General Comments
  o Dates
    ▪ Tuesday, 1 December, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Wednesday, 2 December, 8-11 am EDT
    ▪ Thursday, 3 December, 8-11 am EDT

- Third substantive session
  o Format: physical
  o Tentative Dates
    ▪ Monday, 8 March, to Friday, 12 March 2021 in New York