



**Final Session of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the
field of information and telecommunications in the context of international
security**

**Statement by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

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Virtual Meeting
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Thank you, Ambassador Lauber.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Happy International Women's Day!

As you enter the final stretch of this important Open-ended Working Group journey, please allow me to first of all commend Ambassador Lauber for his able, wise and transparent leadership throughout this entire process. I also wish to commend all of you, the United Nations Member States, for your steadfast commitment over the past year and a half to the Group's crucial work of taking forward international ICT security.

Since its establishment by General Assembly resolution 73/27 in 2018, this Open-ended Working Group has continually broken new ground: this is the first time all UN Member States have come together to study and address the ICT threats that confront us in an increasingly digitally connected world. In this regard, I am pleased to note that over five hundred delegates from 146 countries, together with observers, have participated in this process since its first session in 2019.

Furthermore, this Open-ended Working Group process has also been the first time, on the issue of ICTs in the context of international security, that a dedicated platform has been provided for an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach. During the first multi-stakeholder session held in December 2019, over 100 States and 114 organizations from civil society, the private sector and academia participated in the Open-ended Working Group process. Since that time, stakeholders have also continued to demonstrate their commitment to the process through further dedicated discussions and, importantly, by providing thoughtful contributions, including on each draft of the OEWG report.

Thirdly, this Open-ended Working Group has led the way for the continuation of active multilateralism in the midst of a global health crisis. Throughout the last year, even despite the postponement of the final session of the Group which was scheduled to take place in July 2020, delegations have not once flagged in their political will and their commitment to the success of this process, but have continued their high level of engagement and active participation.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

The final negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group this week constitutes yet another “first” for UN processes on international ICT security: it is the first time in the international security context that a consensus outcome on this topic is being negotiated through an untraditional meeting format due to constraints of the pandemic. Success will require from all delegations, creativity, flexibility, and above all, a collaborative spirit.

The responsibility that lies ahead of you this week is a heavy one. The international community is relying on you to formulate a collective way forward in an ICT environment that presents increasing challenges which need to be urgently addressed. This is a vital endeavour, and one in which the UN Secretariat stands ready to provide you with every support.

Ambassador Lauber, please allow me to conclude by wishing you and by wishing all delegations a successful final session of the Open-ended Working Group.

I thank you very much for your attention.