Other disarmament measures and international security – developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

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Check against delivery

Mr Chairman

In April this year the Australian Government released its second Cyber Security Strategy. The Strategy sets out Australia’s vision for an open, free and secure internet. It establishes a national cyber partnership, between governments, business and the research community, to advance Australia’s cyber security. Developing strong
cyber defences through detection, deterrence and response; enhancing our international engagement through the appointment of a Cyber Ambassador; promoting growth and innovation in Australia’s cyber security companies; and creating a cyber smart nation so that Australians have the appropriate skills and knowledge for the digital age are the key themes of the Strategy.

Mr Chairman

Australia attaches great importance to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

We wish to thank the Chair of the Group, Karsten Geier, for his very useful briefing on the work of the Group presented on 21 October.

The Group is continuing its important deliberations on existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, the identification of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of states, how international law applies to States’ use of information and communications technologies, confidence building measures and capacity building.

Having chaired the Group in 2012-2013, Australia is pleased to have been selected to return to the Group in 2016.

The work of the Group is cumulative. We hope the current Group will build on the previous reports, and in particular,
upon the 2015 Report which contained an important list of eleven voluntary non-binding norms. These norms have wide currency, and are already achieving broad acceptance by Member States. This suggests that the Group responded to a genuine need from Member States and identified the ‘right’ norms. They deserve further consideration by the Group and by the international community.

A challenge for the Group is to provide clear guidance to member states on the complex issues of state behaviour in cyberspace. We hope the Group will be able to meet this challenge and provide practical guidance on international law, norms, confidence building measures and capacity building.

Mr Chairman

The Group operates by consensus. We are certain that under the able Chairmanship of Mr Geier, the Group will deliver a further consensus report, in June next year.

Following that event, we would welcome substantive consideration by this Committee of that Report and its predecessors. This should take the form of a resolution in which the Assembly provides a detailed response to this important work. We suggest that it would be appropriate for this consideration to take place before further work is mandated by the General Assembly.

Mr Chairman

Australia is pleased to support the draft resolution on Developments in the Field of Information and
Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. Like other delegations, we welcome the commencement of the work of the 2016 Group and look forward to a successful outcome in 2017.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.