Explanation of vote on Resolution L.27/rev1: Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Australia, Canada, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom

7 November 2018

Chair,

I speak on behalf of Australia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and my own country, Canada to explain why we cannot support the resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".

This is a strange turn of events for our delegations as we have steadily supported previous versions of this resolution, and the Group of Governmental Experts, or GGEs, they created since 1998, when first introduced by the Russian Federation.

We welcomed and adhere to the consensus recommendations from the 2013 and 2015 GGE’s, in particular the recognition of the applicability of international law in cyberspace and the agreed voluntary norms for State behavior that are now used as the basis for cooperation around the globe.

Unfortunately, this resolution has been completely transformed this year. It no longer seeks to build on the international consensus achieved to date. Instead, it presents selected and incomplete excerpts from the 2013 and 2015 GGE reports which deliberately distort their meaning and undermine their status as the consensus normative basis which to move forward.

This dramatic change in approach on an issue where broad agreement is critical in order to make progress, and where consensus was understood as essential, is profoundly disappointing.

While we believe that the basic premise for pursuing work under this resolution is flawed, and risks destroying hard won international consensus, we do believe that there is merit in further considering how best to address issues such as capacity building and confidence building measures in cyberspace.

At present, we continue to see scope for an expert-led GGE that is both representative enough to bring about outcomes that all can agree to and nimble enough to do so in a reasonable timeframe. We believe that a sixth GGE, complemented by stronger consultation mechanisms, offers a good
compromise that gives all States an opportunity to influence the discussions and have a stake in their successful outcome.

It had been our hope that the United States and the Russian Federation would agree on a single resolution that builds on the successes of the GGE process, while enhancing the process in response to our collective desire that it be more inclusive.

Unfortunately, it has proven impossible to agree on one resolution. Even a compromise that would have seen the two resolutions creating processes that at least complemented each other has eluded us.

The result is two resolutions, and two processes, to the potential detriment of respect for international law and the established global norms in cyberspace. As it is our sincere belief that it is resolution L.27/rev1 that puts both the law and these norms at risk, we have little alternative but to oppose it.

Thank you.

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