Mister Chairman,

I am taking the floor to explain our vote on draft resolutions L.27/rev.1 entitled Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and L.37 titled Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security.

Switzerland is convinced that the UN needs to continue to play a leading role in furthering the international community’s understanding of existing and potential cyber threats as well as of cooperative measures designed to address them. To this end, it is crucial to build on the progress achieved so far in order to help consolidate, universalize and operationalize the 2010, 2013 and 2015 recommendations.

Switzerland has actively advocated for an approach that builds on the consensus of previous resolutions. A consensus resolution would have helped the international community to collectively join its efforts in order to ensure that cyberspace is governed by international law and remains open, free and stable.

We therefore regret that two competing resolutions were submitted to this Committee. They considerably differ in relation to the proposed mandate and process. Departing from the consensual approach comes with a number of risks, including the possible fragmentation of efforts in addressing the challenges states and non-state actors face in the current cybersecurity environment.

We voted yes on draft resolution L.37 as this resolution mirrors recent years’ consensus resolutions. Building upon the previously and incrementally achieved progress remains at the core of Swiss endeavours.
More importantly, we are convinced that at this stage more expert-driven discussions are necessary to take forward the work related to ICTs in the context of international peace and security.

Establishing another UN Group of Governmental Experts, which operates by consensus, will help states in their efforts to implement previously adopted recommendations as articulated in the 2010, 2013 and 2015 reports as well as to identify additional areas of convergence.

We further welcome that the resolution acknowledges the benefits for international cooperation from involving private sector, academia and civil society organisations and establishes a mechanism of collaborating with regional organizations.

We abstained on resolution L.27/rev.1. While we note that the resolution has been considerably revised, we take issue with a number of provisions presented in the resolution.

In OP 1, the references to international norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of States originate from the 2013 and 2015 consensus UN GGE reports. However, they are taken out of their context; they are selectively chosen and sometimes referred to in an incomplete manner. In our view, the UN GGE norms, rules and principles of responsible state behavior only add value to the mitigation of cyber risks if they are addressed in their entirety.

The same comment applies to OP5: We can see the value of an OEWG, which should be tasked to advance our understanding regarding all norms, rules and principles of the UN GGE reports. However, we strongly caution against reopening norms, rules and principles that have already been agreed on. Introducing changes to them would put at risk the progressive successes of previous UN GGEs. Switzerland will participate in the OEWG notably with this key aim in mind.

Moreover, we have reservations with respect to referencing A/RES/36/103 entitled “Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States”. This Declaration was not adopted by consensus and has never been linked to ICTs in the context of international peace and security.

Going forward, it will be of particular importance to ensure coherence between the processes established by resolutions L.27 and L.37, and avoid any contradiction and fragmentation in their activities. The UN membership has progressed on the cybersecurity issue in a unified and cohesive manner so far, and it is crucial that it remains so. Therefore, Switzerland will continue to engage constructively in all UN cyber related discussions with the aim to set the standards for responsible state behavior in cyberspace.

Thank you.