Mr. Chairman,

My remarks today will address U.S. views relating to developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

In September, the United States released its National Cyber Strategy, outlining the steps that the U.S. government will take to renew its commitment to advance and defend the United States' national interests across cyberspace. Moreover, the Strategy calls for the reduction and prevention of destabilizing and malicious cyber activities directed against the United States and its partners' interests, and highlights that activity that is contrary to responsible behavior in cyberspace be deterred through the imposition of costs through cyber and non-cyber means.

As this Strategy also notes, "The United States will promote a framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace built upon international law, adherence to voluntary non-binding norms of responsible state behavior that apply during peacetime, and the consideration of practical confidence building measures to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from malicious cyber activity. These principles should form a basis for cooperative responses to counter irresponsible state actions inconsistent with this framework."

This framework is consistent with – and supportive of – the work on international cyber stability that has taken place over many years in the UN system. For example, the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, or GGE, has served as a productive and groundbreaking expert-level venue to advance international stability in cyberspace. The consensus recommendations of the GGE reports have included affirmation of the applicability of existing international law to States' activities in cyberspace, support for certain voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behavior in peacetime, and the
implementation of practical CBMs. In addition, these reports have demonstrated the value of consensus-driven, expert-level negotiation on this topic within the UN.

The failure to find consensus during the most recent round of GGE discussions demonstrates that challenging issues remain. However, this lack of consensus does not make the existing GGE recommendations of the previous reports any less valid or important.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to view the GGE as the most productive and useful platform to discuss the international security dimensions of cyber issues in the UN system because it is consensus-based, time-limited, and expert-driven.

For that reason, we and many other Member States were extremely concerned when the Russian delegation tabled on October 12 a problematic draft GGE resolution that diverged significantly from many past consensus resolutions. This Russian draft seeks to prejudge the outcome of multilateral cyber discussions by imposing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Code of Conduct on all UN Member States. This Code is a document that has not gained traction within the broader international community since it was first shared at the UN in 2011, as it seeks to expand government control over content on the Internet and undermine free speech. Additionally, we understand that Russia has now abruptly shifted the focus of their resolution to put forward a process that is not a GGE.

We were so concerned by the shift away from consensus by the Russian delegation last week that we chose to take the step of tabling a cyber resolution on October 15. This U.S. draft is in fact the Russian consensus draft of the past, and it mirrors recent years’ consensus resolutions on this topic while seeking to make progress.

We have seen significant support for our draft resolution from a wide range of countries seeking to build upon the consensus-based efforts of the past, and we continue to welcome additional co-sponsors. Your co-sponsorship in no way prejudices a possible future consensus resolution if Russia moves towards compromise. Indeed, our hope remains that we can achieve a single, consensus, resolution this year that continues the progress we have made on these issues in the UNFA First Committee and its GGEs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.