Thank you, Mr. Chairman

As highlighted by the Secretary General in his Agenda for Disarmament, advances in science and technology can have a game-changing impact on our future security, but our joint efforts in this area now will also have a game-changing preventive impact.

Given their transformative and revolutionary effects, emerging technologies with a potential impact on international security need to be subjected to appropriate regulation before this impact is felt in full force. We cannot afford to wait for a catastrophe to motivate and focus our efforts.

The rampant malicious of ICTs and their increasing weaponization by States, in particular, is a matter of utmost concern. Given the ubiquitous and fundamental importance of ICTs for modern societies, no longer can we countenance unchecked behavior in the cyberspace without putting our shared values of peace, security, democracy and human rights in peril. This is one of the most pressing and serious security challenges of our time.

Brazil has long supported and actively participated in discussions on this issue, and has favored the establishment, within the UN framework, of principles, norms and rules for the responsible behavior of States in the use of ICTs. Brazil has participated in three of the five Groups of Governmental Experts convened by the General Assembly on the issue, and a Brazilian expert has chaired the 2014-2015 session of the Group, which was the last to have been able to adopt a substantive report by consensus. In addition, in the context of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, Brazil, together with Germany, has been presenting since 2013 a draft resolution on the right to privacy in the digital age.
Brazil believes that international law – including international humanitarian law and international human rights law – applies to cyberspace. This applicability should not, however, be understood as a way of legitimizing the transformation of the cyber environment into an arena for military conflict. To the contrary, this understanding should foster restraint from all States and contribute to the maintenance of a safe, secure, stable and prosperous ICT environment. Similarly, stating that existing international law applies in cyberspace does not imply that no new norms are needed. For Brazil, there is an urgent need to further develop the existing normative and regulatory framework in the international level.

Mr. Chairman,

At last year’s session of the First Committee, not only was the long-standing practice of decision by consensus on this issue broken, but also two competing resolutions were approved, establishing bodies with different mandates and formats for follow-up discussions on the matter.

Despite this inauspicious background, there is an opportunity for working towards complementarity and convergence. The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) can and should work harmoniously, with a view to reestablishing the much-needed consensus in the treatment of this issue in the context of the United Nations. As the country whose expert has been chosen to chair the GGE, Brazil is ready to contribute to this effort.

It is therefore crucial that, in both the GGE and the OEWG, we all exercise utmost flexibility and constructiveness, with a view to ensuring that their reports and recommendations contribute to strengthening the role of the UN in the field of cybersecurity, as well as to the promotion of an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment for all Nations, and the maintenance of international peace and security.

We hope, in particular, that as the work of both groups progresses, the First Committee will resume its practice of adopting a single resolution by consensus on the issue of ICTs and international security. We therefore urge the cosponsors of the two draft resolutions presented under agenda item 93 at the current session to undertake all efforts to present a unified text that can be adopted by consensus.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.