I. Gender
WILPF takes note of and welcomes the gender references included in paragraphs 9, 17, 34, 52, and 56. It’s very positive to see that the pre-draft reflects the wide support to improve women’s participation that has been called for by states and other stakeholders during OEWG sessions, including recognition that participation be “meaningful” such as through “decision-making” and “leadership” roles, which is reflected in the pre-draft. WILPF also welcomes the reference to differentiated impacts of cyber operations reflected in the summary of discussions on Threats.

Recommendations to strengthen the gender components include:
- The pre-draft does well at recognising what was said in OEWG sessions but stops short at making any gender-related recommendations or conclusions in its final section. These could include recommendations for states to improve gender diversity and women’s participation in all aspects of ICT security activities, from capacity-building and confidence-building to the interpretation and application of laws and norms; consider gendered impacts when investigating a cyber incident and be prepared to take gender-appropriate responses; to uphold women’s human rights online; to call out and condemn online gender-based violence; to enable further research and knowledge-sharing in this area; to commit to certain participation targets in future meetings; or formalise linkages to other relevant international frameworks.
- Reference could be made to gender diversity in lieu of “women’s participation” alone.

II. Cyber peace
WILPF notes that there is insufficient reflection of the concerns raised about the militarisation of cyberspace reflected in the pre-draft report, noted only briefly in paragraph 15. This continued to be a significant area of disagreement among states in the context of international law, and some non-governmental stakeholders have raised this concern, including WILPF.

That said, there is a distinction to be made between when concerns about the militarisation of cyberspace are raised by member states in the context of objecting to the applicability of international humanitarian law (IHL) in cyberspace, and the concerns of civil society and in particular peace organisations, who are calling for a halt to the development and use of offensive cyber capabilities. It has not gone unnoticed that some of the states most vocal about cyber peace and the non-militarisation of cyberspace are also aggressively active in that domain. WILPF would encourage finding ways to nuance this in future iterations of this report.

Positively, the goal of a “peaceful” cyberspace is referenced frequently in the pre-draft, and more often than that of “stability”, a development which WILPF welcomes and supports. More encouragement could be given to articulating what cyber peace looks like practically and calling out actions and activities that run counter to its achievement.

III. Law, norms, and accountability
It was reinforced widely in the substantive sessions, and by non-governmental stakeholders that there is a need for the following activities: for member states to explain and outline exactly how they are interpreting specific law to their practice and activities in cyberspace; to better unpack and promote the existing norms of state behaviour, as well as some suggestion that existing norms be adapted or
even that new ones developed; and finally, that there is a strong need for accountability and/or follow-up mechanisms.

This is reflected in the summary part of the report (paragraphs 26-31, 37, for example). WILPF believes the corresponding action points found in section H are a good start but could be strengthened. For instance, the invitation to member states to be “invited to submit, on a voluntary basis, national views and practice on how international law applies to State use ICTs to the Cyber Policy Portal of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research” could be an encouragement to do so, not an invitation, and some indication given of how that information will be analysed or applied. Experience in other forums show that submitting information just for information’s sake does not always yield a high reporting rate, and usually needs to be incentivised. Similarly, the recommendation for a repository of national practice on rules, norms, and principles that could be developed into guidance is a good basis but would benefit from a clearer vision and sense of purpose. The OEWG report itself could provide guidance rather than putting this off into the future.

WILPF regrets the absence of reference to any of the accountability or peer review mechanisms proposed by member states and civil society, in some cases with great specificity. It suggests that the OEWG commit to prioritising this aspect of the discussion in future with a view to developing a mechanism or framework within a given timeframe.

IV. Regular institutional dialogue
WILPF takes note of Footnote 12 of paragraph 62, which references the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) as a possible model for future institutional dialogue. As an organisation that has reported on and attended meetings of the UNPoA since 2008, WILPF would strongly recommend that member states participating in the OEWG have a clearer understanding of how the UNPoA operates, and its dynamics, before being encouraged to take steps in this direction. This is not to say that a political binding programme of action is not a good model, but rather that not all OEWG delegates are familiar with its modalities. It could be recommended that other existing forums also be outlined as possible models to pursue, including their benefits and drawbacks, for balance and present a wider spectrum of models.

V. Human-centric approaches
WILPF appreciates that the pre-draft proposes that the “interrelated and mutually reinforcing” elements of its mandate “are to be considered through a human-centric lens” (paragraph 12) yet believes it is important that the final report recommend a corresponding action point in this area that would facilitate the application of a human-centric lens to activities in cyberspace and ICTs.

For example, member states could be encouraged to elaborate their perspectives and understandings of the term, including by sharing examples and practical actions that embody such an approach, and how it corresponds with human rights-based approaches to international cybersecurity. They could also be encouraged to reconcile a human-centric approach with halting the development or use of offensive cyber capabilities. WILPF observed in its own reporting on the OEWG that over the course of the two substantive sessions and the informal intersessional consultative meeting, the concept of “human-centric” cyber security gained increasing traction and use among member states and other stakeholders participating in the conference, which gives a basis for a more prominent role in the final report.

VI. Multi-stakeholder participation
The way in which multi-stakeholder participation is characterised in the pre-draft report is misleading. While the December 2019 informal intersessional consultative meeting was a success, and the Chair’s team and UN Secretariat have done well in uploading and circulating civil society working papers and other contributions, and in encouraging those contributions, there have been significant and largely unprecedented issues of non-governmental stakeholder access to this process that should be recorded in the report.

While the decision to block any non-ECOSOC affiliated organisation from attending formal sessions of the OEWG in September 2019 and February 2020 is a procedural one, it has been addressed openly during substantive sessions, warranting inclusion in the summary paragraphs of the draft report. Apart
from the ECOSOC affiliated civil society groups that had access to substantive sessions and who addressed this situation openly during the September 2019 substantive session, a growing number of member states have made explicit calls to allow non-ECOSOC civil society organisations participation in the OEWG sessions. This is alongside more general calls for “better participation”.

WILPF recommends that this support from the basis of a recommendation, in section H, that any future OEWG sessions not restrict the access of non-governmental stakeholders. WILPF also recommends that the report from Mr. David Koh of Singapore, Chair of the informal intersessional consultative meeting, be annexed to the final report of the OEWG, and that the specific recommendations put forward by civil society groups, particularly those who contributed working papers, be better reflected in the summary sections of this report.