Informal Intersessional Consultative Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)

Opening Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

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Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador Jürg Lauber,

Chair of the intersessional meeting, Chief Executive David Koh,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here today at the informal intersessional consultative meeting of the Open-ended Working Group. This is a very exciting moment because it is the first time in the history of UN ICT discussions related to international security, that we are holding an inclusive and global multi-stakeholder meeting.

Despite the overwhelming benefits of ICT technologies, the potential for the misuse of these technology in the wrong hands and for the wrong motives is of increasing concern.

We are here today because whether we come from the public or the private sector, or whether we are representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations or academia, we are all first and foremost concerned global citizens who wish to foster and promote a stable and peaceful digital environment based on global values and norms.

As we commence this milestone event, allow me to reflect on three points.

First, we need to forge a legitimate space for all stakeholders in ICT discussions.

The threats emanating from the digital space are diverse and complex, affecting not only government systems but also private enterprises and individuals.

Industry actors and researchers therefore find themselves at the front lines of the fight against cyber threats.

While States retain primary responsibility for maintaining a secure and peaceful ICT environment, a legitimate space needs to be created for the private sector, as well as academia and civil society in inter-governmental discussions.
In an era of technological inter-dependence, a broad array of participants plays an important role in the development and uptake of emerging technologies, both from an interdisciplinary and a geographic perspective.

Consequently, the need for different voices in creating solutions to challenges in this space cannot be understated – a plurality of views helps to create better developed solutions.

Our hyperconnected digital world means that no one is secure until everyone is secure. There is no one heroine or hero we can look to who will save the day. We have to do it together. Second, we need to continue to look for synergies between inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Civil society actors, as well as private corporations and companies, have shown themselves to be more than willing to engage with States for a safer and more secure cyberspace.

In recent years, many excellent private-sector-led cyber initiatives have been established such as the Cybersecurity Tech Accord led by Microsoft, the Charter of Trust led by Siemens and the Munich Security Conference, and Kaspersky Lab’s Global Transparency Initiative.

Most recently, the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, which has now entered into its second phase and continues to grow, brings together industry, States, NGOs and academia in a commitment to nine Principles for cybersecurity.

These Principles cover a range of issues from developing ways to prevent the proliferation of malicious ICT tools and practices, to the promotion of widespread acceptance and operationalization of international norms for responsible behavior, as well as confidence-building measures for cyberspace.

I hope that one of the issues that we will discuss at this intersessional meeting is how to find synergies between the excellent initiatives that have been undertaken globally on cybersecurity.

After all, while our approaches may differ slightly, we all share the same ultimate goal of a more stable and secure cyberspace.

This brings me to my third and final point, which is to express the hope that all voices will be heard at this meeting.
Under the wise guidance of the Chair, we have before us three days to share new ideas and to come up with creative solutions to address challenges in the digital sphere.

I am excited, as I hope we all are, to listen to the many new voices, and also the many experienced ones, that will speak over the next few days in this room.

It is my sincere hope that we will all be inspired by listening to perspectives that are different from our own, and take away from this meeting a better understanding of how others perceive cyber challenges and opportunities, as well as how we can come together collectively to address them.

With this, I wish you every success, and I am very interested in listening and learning from you.

Thank you.