New York, 11.03.2020

Excellency,

I have the honour of addressing you in my capacity as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security ("OEWG").

I would like to thank all delegations for their great engagement and very substantive inputs, both oral and written, during our process so far.

I am attaching to this letter the initial pre-draft of the report of the OEWG, which will serve as a first basis for discussion / reactions.

Having considered the requests of many delegations, and as announced at the end of the Second substantive session, the pre-draft comprises three parts:

- a narrative introduction (section A) which explains the OEWG’s background and current work to a wider audience,
- a descriptive part (sections B-G), which tries to capture the breadth of the discussions held thus far, including areas that will need further discussions (even beyond the OEWG); and
- a conclusion with specific and practical recommendations (section H), to the extent to which they can currently be derived from the discussion.

I would like to insist that this “pre-draft” is still very much a work in progress. Given the vast amount of material and the tight timelines, the most recent written contributions from delegations have not yet been integrated. Also, additional contributions have been announced by delegations. All of them will be considered as we proceed towards July.

The purpose of this pre-draft is to share my understanding of the Group’s discussions to date for your comments and suggestions. Your feedback will help refine our shared sense of the direction the Group is ready to take in the lead-up to the final substantive session in July.

The first round of informal intersessional exchange is scheduled to take place from 30 to 31 March 2020 in New York. My aim is to seek the reactions of delegations on the basis of the pre-draft. In particular, I would like to receive feedback on whether your views and concerns have been captured, and where we
have room to strengthen areas of agreement in the text. While I will of course be seeking input on the entire pre-draft, I have inserted in square brackets in the text specific areas in which I would like to seek additional input, particularly on proposals in the norms section of the report, and in the recommendations section. I would like to repeat that it is not my intention to discuss or negotiate the text line by line.

In addition to the pre-draft of the report, please find in the Annex to this letter a non-paper listing specific language proposals under agenda item “rules, norms and principles” from written submissions received prior to 2 March 2020. I hope this list can also be discussed at the intersessional. In particular, I would like to hear additional views from delegations on what should be included from the list in the Rules, norms and principles section of the next version of the pre-draft.

As you are certainly aware, the current outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) increasingly impacts on the calendar of meetings at UN HQ. In line with today's letter from the President of the General Assembly, circulated to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers, and the measures he strongly recommends therein, I intend to proceed as follows:

- Hold the first round of informal intersessional exchange from 30 to 31 March 2020 in New York as scheduled;
- Encourage Delegations to limit participation to not more than two New York-based delegates;
- Hold the meeting in a large conference room, to allow for adequate space among participants.

Naturally the situation is evolving on a daily basis. I will adjust the planning of the next steps in our process and update you on this matter as necessary.

I look forward to continued exchange and engagement with all delegations, and I thank you once again for your contributions to the process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

/Jürg Lauber
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chair of the Open-ended Working Group