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Agenda item 98

**Developments in the field of information and
telecommunications in the context of international security****Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 31 December 2020**

[on the report of the First Committee ([A/75/394](#), para. 17)]

**75/240. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications
in the context of international security**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [36/103](#) of 9 December 1981, [43/78](#) H of 7 December 1988, [53/70](#) of 4 December 1998, [54/49](#) of 1 December 1999, [55/28](#) of 20 November 2000, [56/19](#) of 29 November 2001, [57/53](#) of 22 November 2002, [58/32](#) of 8 December 2003, [59/61](#) of 3 December 2004, [60/45](#) of 8 December 2005, [61/54](#) of 6 December 2006, [62/17](#) of 5 December 2007, [63/37](#) of 2 December 2008, [64/25](#) of 2 December 2009, [65/41](#) of 8 December 2010, [66/24](#) of 2 December 2011, [67/27](#) of 3 December 2012, [68/243](#) of 27 December 2013, [69/28](#) of 2 December 2014, [70/237](#) of 23 December 2015, [71/28](#) of 5 December 2016, [73/27](#) of 5 December 2018 and [74/29](#) of 12 December 2019,

Noting that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and means of telecommunication,

Underscoring the aspirations of the international community to the peaceful use of information and communications technologies for the common good of humankind and to further the sustainable development of all countries, irrespective of their scientific and technological development,

Noting that capacity-building is essential for cooperation of States and confidence-building in the field of information and communications technology security,

Recognizing that some States may require assistance in their efforts to bridge the divide in the security of information and communications technologies and their use,



Noting that providing assistance, upon request, to build capacity in the area of information and communications technology security is essential for international security,

Affirming that capacity-building measures should seek to promote the use of information and communications technologies for peaceful purposes,

Confirming that information and communications technologies are dual-use technologies and can be used for both legitimate and malicious purposes,

Expressing concern that a number of States are developing information and communications technology capabilities for military purposes and that the use of such technologies in future conflicts between States is becoming more likely,

Stressing that it is in the interest of all States to promote the use of information and communications technologies for peaceful purposes, with the objective of shaping a community of shared future for humankind in cyberspace, and that States also have an interest in preventing conflict arising from the use of such technologies,

Expressing concern that embedding harmful hidden functions in information and communications technologies could be used in ways that would affect the secure and reliable use of such technologies and the information and communications technology supply chain for products and services, erode trust in commerce and damage national security,

Considering that it is necessary to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes,

Underlining the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the use of information and communications technologies,

Noting that the United Nations should play a leading role in promoting dialogue among Member States to develop common understandings on the security and use of information and communications technologies, as well as in developing common understandings on the application of international law and norms, rules and principles for responsible State behaviour in this sphere, encourage regional efforts, promote confidence-building and transparency measures and support capacity-building and the dissemination of best practices,

Emphasizing the global importance of the negotiation process of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/27](#),

Noting the truly democratic, inclusive and transparent nature of the discussion within the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security,

Recalling that, in considering the application of international law to State use of information and communications technologies, the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, in its 2015 report,¹ identified as of central importance the commitments of States to the following principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other international law: sovereign equality; the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered; refraining in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations; respect

¹ [A/70/174](#).

for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States,

Confirming the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts, in its 2013² and 2015 reports, that international law, and in particular the Charter of the United Nations, is applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful information and communications technology environment, that voluntary and non-binding norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of States in the use of information and communications technologies can reduce risks to international peace, security and stability, and that, given the unique attributes of such technologies, additional norms can be developed over time,

Confirming also that State sovereignty and international norms and principles that flow from sovereignty apply to State conduct of information and communications technology-related activities and to their jurisdiction over information and communications technology infrastructure within their territory,

Reaffirming the right and duty of States to combat, within their constitutional prerogatives, the dissemination of false or distorted news, which can be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of other States or as being harmful to the promotion of peace, cooperation and friendly relations among States and nations,

Recognizing the duty of a State to abstain from any defamatory campaign, vilification or hostile propaganda for the purpose of intervening or interfering in the internal affairs of other States,

Stressing that, while States have a primary responsibility for maintaining a secure and peaceful information and communications technology environment, effective international cooperation would benefit from identifying mechanisms for the participation, as appropriate, of the private sector, academia and civil society organizations,

1. *Decides* to convene, starting from 2021, with a view to ensuring the uninterrupted and continuous nature of the democratic, inclusive and transparent negotiation process on security in the use of information and communications technologies, under the auspices of the United Nations, a new open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, acting on a consensus basis, to continue, as a priority, to further develop the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States and the ways for their implementation and, if necessary, to introduce changes to them or elaborate additional rules of behaviour; to consider initiatives of States aimed at ensuring security in the use of information and communications technologies; to establish, under the auspices of the United Nations, regular institutional dialogue with the broad participation of States; to continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings, existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, inter alia, data security, and possible cooperative measures to prevent and counter such threats, and how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States, as well as confidence-building measures and capacity-building; and to submit, for adoption by consensus, annual progress reports and a final report on the results of its work to the General Assembly at its eightieth session;

2. *Also decides* that, upon the conclusion of the work of the current Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and

² A/68/98.

Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session may adopt a decision in this respect;

3. *Further decides* that the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 shall start its activities upon the conclusion of the work of the current Open-ended Working Group and considering its outcomes, and shall hold its organizational session in 2021 in order to agree on the organizational arrangements connected with the group;

4. *Decides* that the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 may decide to establish thematic subgroups, as the Member States deem necessary, with a view to fulfilling its mandate and facilitating the exchange of views among States on specific issues related to its mandate, and may decide to interact, as appropriate, with other interested parties, including businesses, non-governmental organizations and academia;

5. *Also decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”.

*48th (resumed) plenary meeting
31 December 2020*
