



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

First Committee of the 75th UN General Assembly

Cluster 5: Other Disarmament Measures and International Security

As highlighted during the general debate, Italy believes that ICT and the Internet are one of the greatest human achievements of all times and as such, they should be cherished by all peace-loving nations and preserved. To achieve this, a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace is needed and the work carried out in this Commission is essential to guarantee that. Let us not forget throughout our discussions these coming days that our collective failure to fulfill our mandate might have a direct and negative impact on all our citizens, notwithstanding how abstract and “distant” the issues at hand, *prima facie* may appear to be.

The past 12 months have been very busy in this cyber domain, at the international, European and national level. Italy remains committed to the concept of cyber stability and to the multistakeholder approach, supporting the efforts of the international community leading towards a cyberspace based on the applicability and respect of international law in its entirety, beginning with the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. We fully support the ongoing work of the GGE and the OEWG also in this regard and look forward to both delivering on their mandate during the first semester of 2021.

Let us dwell on Institutional dialogue that remains a key tool to ensure that security, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights fully apply in cyberspace. Since Italy is a staunch supporter of multilateralism and working methods that guarantee inclusivity and build upon existing *acquis*, we believe that upcoming discussions on this issue need to be fully exploited. Institutional dialogue needs to be orderly, predictable and inclusive in order to be able to make constructive progress and be time- and financially efficient.

In the cyber domain, we are not starting from scratch. Whilst participating to international discussions – not only within the UN but also in the context of the EU, NATO and the OSCE just to mention a few – Italy has also continued to develop its national architecture and has approved last week legislation which defines its National Perimeter. We are looking at finalising this work during the first semester of 2021.

This vision is also guiding us through our national policy and diplomatic action and we are currently working on the possibility of offering our national position on the applicability of international law in cyberspace. We thank those who have already started doing this and encourage others to follow suit. All of the above-mentioned work builds on our national cybersecurity strategy and action plan, which are also in the process of being revised. We know that similar efforts are being made by many others and the numbers are increasing, as recognition of the importance and pervasiveness of the cyber domain is mounting within all national Administrations.

In this very dynamic context, Italy has decided to co-sponsor the proposal to establish a Programme of Action on advancing responsible behaviour in cyberspace. We believe that at this delicate juncture States need to come together as further fragmentation of the institutional dialogue does not facilitate the active and meaningful participation of many of us. We recognise the need to further discuss the institutional framework, as many provisions, including the purpose, scope, financing, participation and other issues are still not defined. This work needs to be done collectively if the aim remains adoption by consensus, with a view to reverting to a one-track mechanism which we believe would be the best way for most States to address such sensitive issues. We therefore fully support the Programme of Action and salute it as a very sensible, inclusive and balanced project, which can provide us with an operational dialogue focused on implementation, building on our *acquis*.

To conclude, and as testimony of Italy's openness and willingness to ensure the success of this approach, let me flag our availability to work hand-in-hand with all the Member States of the UN as we acknowledge capacity building as a crucial tool to achieve our ultimate goals. Whether in the areas of international law, national legislation and policy, or more technical issues, we believe that regional organizations and dialogue between and among these could be the perfect setting to bring capacity building activities forward, on top of bilateral exchanges.

These activities should facilitate convergence as we are all aiming at universality. So long as we all abide by the principles of neutrality, objectivity, inclusiveness and accessibility and that we work together with academia and other stakeholders who hold much needed expertise, this should be possible. Although referred to other fields, the pandemic has emphasized the importance of a universally respected and reliable scientific community. We think the same is valid for all domains related to cybersecurity, we should be embracing such diversity which will help us to converge towards unity of intent.