



STATEMENT FROM THE GCSC ON THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE REPORT OF THE UN OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP

March 12, 2021

This statement was delivered by Dr. Alexander Klimburg, Director of the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace (GCSC), on March 12, 2021, during the “Informal Multistakeholder Segment” of the meeting of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on ICTs (OEWG).

Thank you, Chair. As before, I am representing the [Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace \(GCSC\)](#)¹, which appreciates the opportunity to again contribute to the work of the OEWG. This has been a busy week for everyone but especially for the OEWG Chair and secretariat, so I will keep my remarks fairly short.

The Commission has followed the work of the OEWG closely and congratulates it on its Final Draft document. The GCSC is gratified to see how much of its work, and in particular the eight norms it has advocated, have been reflected in earlier drafts.² Most relevantly, this includes the norm to protect the public core of the Internet, which has been adopted both in the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace and the EU Cybersecurity Act.

While we regret that the term “public core” was not reflected in the Final Draft document, we were encouraged by the adoption of much of its general spirit throughout the text, largely in support of all actors taking responsibility for safeguarding the “integrity and availability of the Internet”. Of course, we would have liked to see a stronger commitment.

In paragraph 18 of the Final Draft, however, we see that that wording lends itself to a somewhat ambiguous interpretation that we hope can still be addressed. While the GCSC had advocated for adding the “general integrity and availability of the Internet” to this paragraph, the preceding and

¹ As represented by its Secretariat provided by the [Hague Centre for Strategic Studies \(HCSS\) Centre for Strategic Studies \(HCSS\)](#).

² These included, inter alia the [norm to protect the public core of the Internet](#) and the [norm to protect electoral infrastructure](#).

following sentences now imply that the Internet is a critical infrastructure or critical information infrastructure. As stated previously, we believe this is not the case, as general availability and integrity of the Internet also depends upon nonmaterial processes that do not have a specific owner, such as the protocols needed to make the Internet function. Also, paragraph 18 now includes a reference to public-private partnerships to manage these international infrastructures, although today, in some cases, government does not actually play a role in their management. We would thus have greatly preferred to see a clearer commitment to the multistakeholder approach instead.

Although we have substantial reservations regarding the final wording in paragraph 18, we nonetheless welcome the Final Draft. In particular, it shows that the OEWG process and its inclusive approach to consultations was a success. We believe this is merely the beginning of the OEWG's journey, and we believe that success will continue to depend on the ability to leverage effective multistakeholder engagements on such critical issues as norms and norm enforcement.

This document owes its success to many actors. In this context we would also like to thank the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs as well as the Reaching Critical Will program in providing crucial and expert support. We also would like to thank David Koh for his chairmanship of the intersessional multistakeholder meeting, which we believe helped provide a stage to illustrate the contributions that non-governmental actors were able to make. And in particular we would like to thank Ambassador Lauber for his chairmanship and inclusive approach to working with non-governmental actors. We have no doubt that it made a great difference.

We would like to congratulate all stakeholders for their efforts in this important endeavor and look forward to working with you in the future.