



**Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe  
President of ECOSOC**

**Special Event on Cybersecurity and Development  
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Distinguished guests,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we use information and communications technologies (ICTs) in virtually all aspects of our lives, particularly for communicating with each other, shopping and banking, and more. Governments too rely heavily on ICTs to provide services such as transportation, water and power, healthcare, and education. The private sector also uses them in industrial processes and supply chains and as a vehicle to market their products.

And it is not just here in cities like New York; ICTs play an important role all over the world. While some may argue that there is a digital divide and not all countries are reaping the full benefits of the digital age, there are nonetheless many promising signs. ICTs are known to play a crucial role in development and poverty reduction. Among developing countries, this perspective incorporates ICTs into the development agenda because of their relevance in transforming human activities and in presenting new opportunities for economic growth. Mobile phones and the Internet have had beneficial impacts on supporting the livelihoods of rural people, particularly farmers in Asia. In Africa, mobile phones are the most widely-used form of communications technology.

Although developments in ICTs have made our lives more convenient in many ways and transactions much faster, by using them, we are exposing ourselves to numerous risks. The economic impact and consequences of cyber attacks against critical physical infrastructure, the banking system, national health systems, essential government and industry databanks and services could be extremely high. The disruption of trade, economic and social activities can retard countries' progress towards achieving the MDGs and in combating poverty. Cyber attacks also have the potential for triggering inter-state and other conflicts which can put the entire development process at considerable risk. Developing countries, with relatively weak surveillance capacity are most vulnerable to such cyber attacks.

How then do we ensure that everyone can benefit from the transformational power of ICTs, while protecting them from the risks that these tools pose?

This central question should be addressed by all stakeholders. All of us, Member States, the private sector and civil society, have a stake in improving cybersecurity – to protect our economy, our personal information and our children. Because of the cross-border nature of many cyber attacks, do we need to address this together as an international community? What kind of international norms do we need to establish? Should we consider an international code of conduct or cooperation framework to address cyber attacks, cyber crime and common operating standards?

These are very serious issues, which require the attention of the global community and ECOSOC has not stood idle. In line with its mandate by the General Assembly to follow-up on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Council has continued to follow this issue closely with the support of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Council's own Commission on Science and Technology. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the facilitator for the WSIS Action Line C5: Building Confidence and Security in the usage of ICTs and global coordinator for WSIS. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development is the focal point

for system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the Summit.

In this connection, I am pleased that we are joined by Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, and via video link from the Philippines, the Honourable Undersecretary Fortunato de la Peña, Undersecretary for Science and Technology of the Philippines, and Chair of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development, both of whom will set the stage for a panel discussion which will follow.

Once the stage has been set, our distinguished panel of speakers will address the theme: “An international framework to combat cybercrime and improve cybersecurity”.

It is with great pleasure that I give the floor to Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union.

Thank you.