



## **Opening statement by the Republic of Estonia,**

### **By Amb. Heli Tiirmaa-Klaar for the UN GGE Panel on regional consultations**

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Your Excellencies, Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to address regional perspectives on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. It is the first time a UN GGE engages with regional organisations in a systematic manner, paving the way for a better understanding of regional perspectives.

Over the last decade, the United Nations First Committee has served as the most important platform for the international community to address international peace, stability and security in relation to the development and use of ICTs. Three previous GGEs have found by consensus that international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, is applicable to cyberspace, and agreed upon several norms of responsible state behaviour to guide the conduct of States in cyberspace. The 2013 and 2015 UN GGE reports have endorsed the understanding that State conduct concerning ICT-related activities needs to be addressed by international voluntary and non-binding norms. The GGE has made conclusions on how international law applies in several areas, such as the prohibition of using proxies to conduct internationally wrongful acts, the obligation to respect and protect human rights, and the jurisdiction of States over ICT infrastructure located within their territory, to name but a few. Additionally, we have already adopted and are in the process of implementing numerous regional confidence building measures and working on a number of capacity building programmes.

We have to build on this progress. The work conducted by the previous GGEs should now be implemented and the regional organisations have a key role in this process.

Throughout this year, we have held regional GGE consultations with the regional organisations. We are now much better prepared to continue our discussions.

Consultations with these regional organisations have shed light on different regional approaches to the implementation of previous UN GGE reports. These consultations have broadened outreach of the GGE process beyond its 25 member states with the aim to advance upcoming discussions in the sixth GGE from 2019 to 2021. Regional organisations play a crucial role in building trust and confidence between States; the work that has been undertaken by the regional organisations has proven pivotal in this regard.

Equipped with insights into national and regional priorities, these consultations could provide us with a clearer perspective on how to put current achievements into practice. Our discussions today could serve as an excellent starting point for the GGE meeting next week – we are keen to hear from the regional organisations on their views about the consultations and what would be their recommendations to the starting GGE.

Thank you for your attention.