

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Statement delivered by

H.E. Ms. Karen Van Vlierberge,

Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative

Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting:

“Cyber Stability, Conflict Prevention and Capacity Building”

New York, May 22nd 2020

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Let me first express my gratitude to the Estonian Presidency for hosting this meeting. I also thank the different briefers for their statements.

Belgium is particularly honoured to co-sponsor this important event.

The ongoing global health crisis that the world is experiencing due to the Corona virus has suddenly challenged the way we live, learn, connect and work, and has highlighted our increasing reliance on the Internet, and the need for a secure, safe and free digital space.

Mr. President,

Achieving this objective requires both a shared international understanding on the governance of cyberspace *and* real actions to implement this vision on the ground.

The international debate on the governance of cyberspace is in a crucial phase. Belgium strongly supports the ongoing debates within the UN framework. The following elements are key:

- First, Belgium advocates a shared vision of a global, free, open, stable, peaceful and secure cyberspace, where human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law apply. This shared understanding is built upon an inclusive approach in which all stakeholders - including civil society, the private sector and the academic world - are heard.
- Second, the international community must continue to strive for a truly universal cyber security framework for responsible State behaviour. This has to be based on existing international law - including the UN Charter in its entirety -, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law.

- Third: we believe that we should better align international criminal justice with the challenges of the 21st century. This is why Belgium has joined Liechtenstein in its initiative to create a Council of Advisers on the Application of the Rome Statute to Cyberwarfare in order to explore the role the International Criminal Court could play in this new regulatory framework.

Mr. President,

Words are to be followed by actions in order to make a difference. Therefore the focus on implementing what we have agreed so far is crucial.

That is why Belgium, together with our European partners, puts so much emphasis on regional and global cooperation mechanisms, as well as on multi-stakeholder engagement. As this is a truly global challenge, we all need to take our responsibilities.

States have a particular role to play. They should refrain from actions that undermine international safety and security and, if necessary, be held responsible for their actions. States should closely work together in regional or international fora to build mutual confidence. States should also work hard to increase global resilience in other ways, including by supporting each other in building the necessary capacity at national level.

Mr. President,

Although the present crisis has brought many challenges, it has also shown the need for stronger multilateralism in and on cyberspace. International cooperation to promote security and stability in cyberspace is a global common endeavour.

I thank you.