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Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations

To all Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

New York, 31.12.2019

Excellency,

I have the honour of addressing you in my capacity as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (OEWG).

It seems fair to say that we have accomplished some progress in the early sessions – formal and informal – of the OEWG. The discussions throughout the First substantive session in September 2019 revealed several areas of convergence, as well as issues that require further discussion. The high engagement of so many delegations bears witness to the relevance of the topic for all Member states, which I found confirmed when I attended the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace (GGE) regional consultations in Bratislava, Washington DC, Singapore and Addis Ababa.

Then we also had a very successful informal intersessional consultative meeting in December, with numerous Member states and over 100 NGOs, businesses and academic institutions in the room, and a good exchange between them. I would like to once again thank Mr. David Koh of Singapore and his team for having so excellently chaired this meeting. The circulation of his Summary amongst all participants is scheduled for the second half of January 2020.

As you know, the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (GGE) has also held informal consultations and its first session in December.

As the year draws to a close, I am sending you enclosed hereby a set of documents that shall help prepare for the OEWG's Second substantive session (10-14 February).

The **draft Programme of work** for the February session is inspired by the structure of the September session. I intend to maintain flexibility on the exact scheduling (ending/beginning) of the specific topic-related discussion parts, bearing in mind that they might be unequally time-consuming.

I have also prepared a **Chair's working paper** for the Second substantive session. This document is meant to energize the discussion among Delegations, and includes some suggested questions Delegations may wish to consider addressing at the Second session, but does not intend to pre-determine any outcome. I would welcome concrete proposals and suggestions from Delegations during the Second session on each topic so that we may deepen our consideration of various elements in preparation for drafting a report.

633 Third Avenue, 29th floor
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 1-212-286-1540, Fax: 1-212-286-1555
newyork.un@eda.admin.ch, www.eda.admin.ch/missny

Furthermore, at the request of some Members of the Group, the UNODA/UNIDIR support team has produced **three background papers**: the first paper provides a non-exhaustive overview of existing UN bodies and processes dealing with the issues mentioned throughout the discussions in relation to our mandate; the second paper summarizes GGEs' recommendations to date on how international law applies to the use of information and telecommunication technologies in the context of international security; the third paper shows the recommendations GGEs have so far made on regular institutional dialogue.

As mentioned at the end of the First substantive session in September, the totality of the Group's discussions from the First and Second sessions will provide the basis for the "pre-draft" of the substantive component of the report that I intend to prepare following the Second substantive session (**tentative structure attached**).

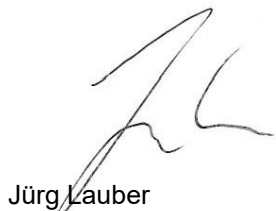
This pre-draft will be the subject of two rounds of intersessional informal exchange meetings among the members of the Working Group in March and May 2020, following which I will circulate the zero draft of the report to you in time for the Third (and final) substantive session, which will take place from 6 to 10 July 2020 in New York.

Please be kindly informed that we had to slightly change the dates of the two rounds of intersessional informal exchange: the first such exchange will take place on March 30-31 and a second one on May 28-29.

I am looking forward to constructively engaging with your delegation in 2020 and I thank you once again for your excellent contributions to the process so far.

I wish you and the members of your Delegation a Prosperous New Year!

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Jürg Lauber
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chair of the Open-ended Working Group

Enclosures:

- Draft Programme of work for the Second substantive session
- Chair's working paper for the Second substantive session
- Tentative draft structure of the substantive component of the report
- Background paper on existing UN bodies and processes related to the mandate
- Background paper on past GGEs' recommendations on International Law
- Background paper on past GGEs' recommendations on Regular institutional dialogue