Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to begin with our general comments on the issue of “regular institutional dialogue”, which is the distinct agenda of the OEWG, and share our views on the related pre-draft.

General remarks

1- Our discussions today should be conducted in light of the newly adopted resolution in the First Committee where the institutional dialogue over the course of the next few years has been decided, a new OEWG.

2- The Islamic Republic of Iran has clearly presented its views through statements and interventions in the OEWG substantive and virtual sessions as well as through written submissions.

3- We reiterate our previous position that the OEWG, with the extended mandate till 2025, is the sole open-ended, all-inclusive intergovernmental UN body broadly dealing with extensive and emerging ICT developments in the context of international security. It is also the appropriate body to build up on asymmetric and fragmented efforts so far made through other fora.

4- A consensus is emerging in the Group regarding the prevalent recognition of an imperative peaceful nature within the ICT environment. Accordingly, the pre-draft, including the parts related to RID, shall avoid giving an impression, explicitly or implicitly, that the ICT environment
constitute a new battlefield. Furthermore, the OEWG is not a disarmament body. Rather, it is established through the First Committee to discuss ICT developments in the context of international security.

5- As emphasized by the Non-Aligned Movement, the OEWG’s mandate is to serve as a regular institutional dialogue within the UN to continue deliberation on the international security context of the ICT. The OEWG should continue its function until an open-ended and all-inclusive intergovernmental body for consultation, cooperation and decision-making in cyber-related issues is established by the UN. As we have reiterated before, we see no justification whatsoever to have a parallel work or dual track to work on the mandate given to the OEWG under Para 5 of the 73/27 UN GA Resolution renewed by the recent resolution.

6- The OEWG mechanism allowed all UN member states to actively participate in the process of international norm-setting and rule-making, with respect to the security aspect of the ICT’s applications. Since its inception, the OEWG has created a historic opportunity for UN members to be involved in substantive discussions for the first time at the United Nations on international security context of the ICTs, given the fact that 117 delegations actively participated in its deliberations and more that 70 states had shared their views and comments on the issues at hand. This clearly demonstrates that there is genuine interest among UN members to engage in the work of the OEWG.

7- The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to support the central role of the UN in upgrading security in the ICT environment through international cooperation. That is why we continue to support the OEWG’s substantive, detailed and deliberative process leading to an all-encompassing outcome.

8- We shall avoid impulsiveness at this stage. We need to carefully study all possible patterns pertaining to dialogue and cooperation for the future. Replicating the UN Small Arms & Light Weapons Program of Action model, which has not yet proven its effective value in preventing,
combating and eradicating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, does not serve the purpose.

9- According to UNODA, the widespread illicit transfer of approximately 1 billion small arms in circulation around the world to terrorists and organized criminals continues to pose a significant threat to world security.

10- We need to carefully evaluate the pros and cons of the Small Arms and Light Weapons PoA, along with other proposals, to review their applicability and effectiveness within cyberspace. The new resolution in the First Committee gives the mandate to the next OEWG to review the new initiatives and proposals of member states. The Islamic Republic of Iran may also submit a discrete proposal for consideration by the next OEWG.

11- As the establishment of the OEWG has been widely welcomed by UN member states and given the varied scope and diversity of its mandate, the OEWG needs to continue its work as a single UN regular institutional dialogue forum to fulfill its mandate. Consequently, we expect the distinguished OEWG Chairman to present a roadmap for the next OEWG’s continued deliberations as part of its report to the 75th UN GA.

12- The lessons learned and experience gained in the current OEWG demonstrate that we can expect collective and dynamic participation of UN member states in the work of the next OEWG. We are confident that those who did not support the resolution in the First Committee this time will be part of the joint work as of 2021 when the OEWG is reconvened. This could also be the right point to put an end to further continued parallelism. We now have more than four years of sufficient opportunity available to us to work in more detailed formats on our mandate and to establish, if needed, thematic subgroups to help the new OEWG to fulfill its mandate. As we proposed earlier, there is a need for a Programme of Work with a timetable to be agreed upon when we meet in 2021 in order to discuss the organizational matters of the next OEWG.
13- Although the next OEWG is mandated till 2025, it may finish its work earlier. As per provisions of the newly adopted resolution, the OEWG should submit to the GA the progress reports in 2022, 2023, 2024 and a final report in 2025. There is the possibility for the OEWG to finish its work earlier than mandated when an alternative UN inclusive mechanism is agreed upon. This may remove the concerns of those who voted against the Resolution.

Specific comments on paragraphs 62-71 of the pre-draft text:

- Our earlier comments on the chapeaus are also applicable here; there is no need for chapeaus across the whole report.

  - In **paragraph 62**:

    - Add this sentence at the end of the paragraph “Accordingly, the current open-ended working group was established by the resolution 73/27 of December 2018.”

  - The last sentence of **paragraph 63** should be merged with **paragraph 71** where participation of non-state stakeholders is mentioned.

  - In **paragraph 64**:

    - In the first sentence, we propose to replace “misuse” with “malicious use”.

    - At the end of first sentence, we suggest to add “as well as negotiating the legally binding instrument(s).”

    - In second sentence after “most appropriate format”, we suggest the phrase “within the UN system” be added.

  - In **paragraph 65**:
In second sentence, we suggest the phrase “negotiating the legally binding instrument(s)” be added after “exchanging good practices”;

In last sentence, we are of the firm view that the phrase “disarmament machinery” should be deleted and the sentence should end after “UN”, given the fact that our mandate is to discuss ICT developments in the context of international security, not disarmament.

- In paragraph 66:

  o Any compliance and verification mechanism shall be devised and implemented through legally-binding instruments where all states are considered equal in terms of their rights and obligations. So, in the second line of the first sentence after “voluntary or”, we propose to add “legally”.

- Paragraph 67 does not reflect the discussions in the OEWG. Delegations presented different views and cast doubt on the existence of commitments as well as the feasibility and effectiveness of a politically-binding declaration based on UN GA resolution 70/237. This paragraph shall be rectified to this effect.

- Paragraph 68 must be revised in light of the newly adopted resolution in the First Committee. We propose to replace the second, third and fourth sentences with the following text: “.... indefinitely. Accordingly, states considered the GA resolution .... of December 2020, where a new OEWG would be established in 2021, as an important step toward institutionalizing regular dialogue on security aspect of ICTs in the UN system.”

- In paragraph 69:

  o The last sentence should be deleted in light of the recent resolution in the First Committee.

- We propose a new paragraph 69bis:

  o “States further noted the authorization given by GA resolution .... of 2020 enabling next OEWG to establish sub-groups. Applicability of
existing intentional law, responsible behavior of non-
governmental stakeholders were among thematic areas noted for
establishment of sub-groups. “

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.