CONCEPT NOTE

SIDE EVENT ON THE MARGINS
OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL WEEK
“25 YEARS OF DISCUSSIONS ON SECURITY OF AND IN THE USE
OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS”

Date: 22 September 2023
Time: 3pm – 6pm
Venue: Conference Room 3
Participation: All UN Member States, Permanent Observers, UN entities, civil society organizations and press are invited

The meeting will be held in English and webcast on UN WebTV.

Background:

The year 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the launch of negotiations on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) under the auspices of the United Nations. In 1998, the Russian Federation submitted its first draft resolution “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” that was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. Since then, this important topic has never left the UN agenda, and the adoption of relevant draft resolutions has become annual, with the latest one adopted in 2022 (77/36).

In order to ensure the ability of the international community to find common ground on the most pressing issues related to security of and in the use of ICTs and jointly address them, the Russian Federation put forward a number of initiatives on establishing formats
for relevant discussions. The first one was the Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of ICTs in the context of international security, which had six iterations between 2004 and 2021. The Group’s work resulted in enhancing common understanding on some of the key issues of security of and in the use of ICTs, such as developing a number of rules, norms and principles of responsible State behavior in information space.

In the same vein, in order to ensure consistency and inclusivity of negotiations on security of and in the use of ICTs under the auspices of the General Assembly, the Russian Federation suggested establishing an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, where all the 193 UN Member States could participate on equal footings and raise any issues of their concern related to the security of and in the use of ICTs. As this format proved its efficiency, with its final report adopted by consensus in 2021, the work in this field has continued within the framework of the OEWG on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025. So far, the current OEWG has already produced concrete outcomes, adopting two consensual Annual Progress Reports in 2022 and 2023. Moreover, the fifth substantive session of the Group held in July 2023 marked the implementation of the initially Russian proposal on establishing global intergovernmental Points of Contact Directory, aimed at enhancing cooperation between competent national authorities in detecting, preventing and eliminating consequences of computer attacks, as well as responding to computer incidents.

As the OEWG continues its deliberations in accordance with its mandate set out in the GA resolution 75/240, with most UN Member States expressing their commitment to it, further work of the Group opens prospects for achieving its goals. In particular, this refers to the elaboration of an international legal framework in this field, in line with the consensual GA resolution 76/19 noting the possibility of developing additional norms of responsible State behaviour, including binding obligations. The Concept of the United Nations Convention on Ensuring International Information Security, put forward by the
Russian Federation and a group of like-minded States and circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, could serve as a basis for relevant discussions.

**Objectives:**

The side event will represent an opportunity to take stock of the achievements that have been reached by the international community in addressing the issues of security of and in the use of ICTs under the UN auspices during the last 25 years. It will help overview the work of the OEWG on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025 as the unique forum for discussing these matters and to reflect on possible ways of achieving the goals set in its mandate with an emphasis on further practical implementation of the agreements reached within the Group and the future of regular institutional dialogue.

**Speakers’ focus areas:**

The participants may wish to focus on the following questions:

- What are the main outcomes and lessons learnt by the international community throughout the recent 25 years of discussing security of and in the use of ICTs under the auspices of the United Nations?
- What additional steps may be taken in order to strengthen the work of the OEWG on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025, including its role in elaborating international legal framework in this field?
- What is the future of regular institutional dialogue on security of and in the use of ICTs within the United Nations?

**Programme:**

Opening remarks:

- **H.E. Mr. Sergey Vershinin**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Panel presentations:

- **TBC**;
– TBC;
– TBC;
– TBC;
– TBC.

Discussion:
– Statements by the Member States as time permits, Q&A. Interventions are suggested to be limited to 3 minutes.

Closing remarks:
– H.E. Mr. Sergey Vershinin.