Mr Chairman, Delegates,

I have the honour to present the Report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security contained in A/68/98.

The Group was convened under Resolution 66/24 which was adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2011. The Secretary-General was requested, in paragraph 4 of the Resolution, to convene a Group which would “continue to study existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, including norms, rules or principles of responsible behavior of States and confidence-building measures with regard to information space”.

The Secretary-General appointed a Group comprising fifteen Experts nominated by the Governments of Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Canada, China, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The Group met on three occasions for one week each: in August 2012 at UN Headquarters in New York, in January 2013 in Geneva and in June 2013 again at UN Headquarters in New York.

As requested in the Resolution, the Group took as its starting point the Report of the previous Group of Governmental Experts, contained in A/65/201 of 30 July 2010. I wish to particularly acknowledge the contribution of the Chair of the previous Group, Ambassador Andrey Krutskikh, who served on the current Group and whose experience and advice was greatly appreciated by the Group and by myself as Chair.

The Group considered the views and assessments of Member States on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security provided in response to the invitation from the General Assembly contained in its Resolutions 64/25, 65/41 and 66/24 as well as other measures contained in resolutions 55/63, 56/121, 57/239, 58/199 and 64/211. The Group also took note of document A/66/359.

The Group deliberated on the issues set out in its mandate over the three sessions. It considered:

- threats, risks and vulnerabilities;
- ways and means of building cooperation for a peaceful, secure, resilient and open ICT environment;
• and agreed upon recommendations in relation to norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of States;
• on confidence-building measures and the exchange of information; and
• on capacity building measures.

I am pleased to advise that, at its final session, following intensive discussions and negotiations, the Group was able to adopt its Report by consensus. This result was a reflection of the constructive approach that each Expert brought to the GGE. I wish to thank each of the Experts for their strong support for the GGE process and their contribution to reaching consensus on the final report.

The Group’s consideration of existing and potential threats, building on the 2010 Report, is set out in paragraphs 5 to 10. The current Report notes that ICTs are dual-use technologies and can be used for both legitimate and malicious purposes. Threats to individuals, businesses, national infrastructure and Governments have grown more acute and incidents more damaging. The sources of these threats comprise both States and non-State actors. As well, individuals and groups may act as proxies for States in the conduct of malicious ICT actions. The absence of common understandings on acceptable State behaviour with regard to the use of ICTs increases the risk to international peace and security.

The expanding use of ICTs in critical infrastructure and industrial control systems creates new possibilities for disruption. The rapid increase in the use of mobile communications devices, web services, social networks and cloud computing services expands the challenges to security. Different levels of capacity for ICT security among States can increase vulnerability in an interconnected world. These vulnerabilities are amplified by disparities in national law, regulations and practices related to the use of ICTs.

The Group notes that Member States have repeatedly affirmed the need for cooperative action against threats resulting from the malicious use of ICTs. Further progress in international cooperation will require an array of actions to promote a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative ICT environment.

I would like now to draw to your attention the key recommendations of the Report.

In relation to norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of States, the application of norms derived from existing international law relevant to the use of ICTs by States is an essential measure to reduce risks to international peace, security and stability. Common understandings on how such norms shall apply to State behavior and the use of ICTs by States requires further study. Given the unique attributes of ICTs, additional norms could be developed over time.

International law, and in particular, the Charter of the United Nations, is applicable and is essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, peaceful and accessible ICT environment.

State sovereignty and international norms and principles that flow from sovereignty apply to State conduct of ICT-related activities, and to their jurisdiction over ICT infrastructure within their territory.

State efforts to address the security of ICTs must go hand in hand with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
States should intensify cooperation against criminal or terrorist use of ICTs.

State must meet their international obligations regarding internationally wrongful acts attributable to them. States must not use proxies to commit such acts; they should seek to ensure their territories are not used by non-State actors for unlawful use of ICTs.

The Report observes that voluntary confidence building measures can promote trust and assurance among States and help reduce the risk of conflict by increasing predictability and by reducing misperception. The Report outlines a range of such measures which it recommends that States consider implementing. These measures include:

- The exchange of information on national strategies and policies, best practices, decision-making processes and relevant national organisations.
- The creation of consultative frameworks, bilaterally, regionally or multilaterally.
- Enhanced sharing of information among States on ICT security incidents.
- Exchanges of information between national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) bilaterally, within CERT communities and in other forums.
- Increased cooperation to address incidents that could affect ICT or critical infrastructure.
- Enhanced mechanisms for law enforcement cooperation.

The Report affirms the importance of capacity building measures in the effort to secure ICTs and their use. Some states may require assistance in their efforts to improve the security of critical ICT infrastructure; develop technical skill; and appropriate legislation, strategies and regulatory frameworks to fulfill their responsibilities; and to bridge the divide in the security of ICTs and their use.

The Report draws attention to the different roles of the various stakeholders in the security of and in the use of ICTs – states, the private sector and civil society – in relation to the development of norms, confidence building measures and capacity building measures. The Report also comments on the different roles of the United Nations and regional organisations in improving security of and in the use of ICTs.

The Group was supported in its work by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research which served as consultant and was represented by James Lewis, Kerstin Vignard, and Ben Baseley-Walker. Ewen Buchanan of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs served as Secretary of the Group. I wish to express my appreciation for the excellent support provided by these individuals and organisations.

Mr Chairman, as I have outlined, the Group has made a number of important recommendations, some of which appear for the first time in a UN document. The Report provides a solid foundation for further work. I commend the Report of the Group of Governmental Experts to the First Committee and, through it, to Member States, for their consideration.