OEWG ICT (2021-2025)

Virtual, open-ended informal meeting between all interested states and stakeholders

31 March 2022

Distinguished Chair, colleagues, good afternoon.

My name is Verónica Ferrari and I work with the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). APC is an international NGO and network of members working at the intersections of technology, human rights, sustainable development and gender equality.

We have been following the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) process since its inception so we welcome the opportunity to engage in this meeting.

For this intervention, we will focus on the questions of **what ways our organisation and other civil society groups** can contribute in the field of ICT security and **how we can support states and the OEWG in capacity building**.

Firstly, civil society organisations, such as APC and others in this meeting, have an important role in **making sure that cyber capacity building is informed by human rights**, following one of the capacity-building guiding principles in the previous OEWG final report.

For example, civil society brings a **human rights perspective to national cybersecurity policies and strategies**, promoting a holistic approach to cybersecurity that goes beyond national security concerns, and **includes issues of access to digital technologies, skills and multistakeholder participation**, among other things.

In particular, **APC is now conducting research** that seeks to provide guidance on how to better incorporate gender perspectives to cybersecurity national policies.

Civil society also conducts **training on cybersecurity policies and digital security** tailored for specific needs and contexts.

APC members and partners provide, for example, **digital security training** for at-risk groups, including women journalists and rights defenders.

APC's [Feminist Tech Exchange](#) develops training curriculums tailored for women's rights activists so they can use the internet safely, creatively and strategically.

APC also runs the **[African School on Internet Governance](#) (AfriSIG)**. AfriSIG is an annual course whose goal is to strengthen the capacities of African leaders from diverse sectors and backgrounds to participate in local and international internet governance discussions.

AfriSIG is designed, **developed and run by colleagues in and from the region**, together with partners like the African Union and Research ICT Africa.

Since AfriSIG's inception in 2013, **cybersecurity has been part of the School's programme**, and in recent years it has taken up increasing space on the agenda.

Finally, we wanted to encourage the group to build on the last OEWG report and the principle that says that **capacity building should be gender sensitive, inclusive and non-discriminatory.**

In particular, we encourage the group to go further regarding the gender approach to capacity building.

It is not something that should be added to already existing initiatives, but it should be mainstreamed in the development, implementation and evaluation of capacity-building programmes.

This will allow capacity-building initiatives to re-examine the concept of cybersecurity to go beyond defense and threats, to have a better understanding of the complexities of security for women and people of diverse gender expressions.

Thank you for your attention and look forward to discussing and working on these issues with member states and other stakeholders.

Statement delivered by Verónica Ferrari, APC global policy advocacy coordinator, at the virtual, open-ended informal meeting between all interested states and stakeholders