SURINAME
Statement on behalf of the Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)
by H.E. Mrs. Kitty Sweeb,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Suriname to the United Nations
On Other Disarmament Measures and International Security
in the Thematic Debate of the First Committee,
69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 28 October 2014

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

As UNASUR countries we wish to express our views regarding the agenda item "Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security".

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) should be a tool for the promotion of inclusion and development, and should not be used by State and non-State actors in violation of international or human rights law, any principle of peaceful relations among sovereign nations, or the privacy of citizens.

The latest UNASUR Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Paramaribo on 30 August 2013, strongly rejected the interception of telecommunications and espionage actions, which constitute a threat to security and serious violations of human, civil and political rights, of international law and of national sovereignty, and which damage relations among nations.

In order to address this issue in South America, UNASUR Heads of State and Government decided to accelerate the development of projects for cyber defense and safer interconnection of fiber optic networks in our countries. Their aim is to make our telecommunications more secure, strengthen the development of regional technologies and promote digital inclusion.
Mr. Chairman,

Aware of the development of offensive capacities in cyberspace as part of military doctrines, UNASUR Member States share a growing concern with the vulnerability of critical infrastructure and possible conflict escalations prompted by cyber attacks. In this context, we favor the strengthening of international norms and principles applicable to States in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, while preserving the free flow of information and the right to privacy.

We welcome the start of discussions within the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established by General Assembly Resolution 68/243, which incorporates experts from two UNASUR countries. We look forward with great interest to the report to be presented to the 70th session of UNGA by the Group, which could contribute, inter alia, to the consideration of important confidence building measures in this field.

We welcome the conclusion of the previous report of the GGE - which included an expert from one UNASUR Member State - that international law and, in particular the United Nations Charter, is applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting open, secure, peaceful and accessible information and communications technologies.

We are therefore ready to engage in a constructive debate, highlighting the importance of respect for the sovereignty of nations, the right to privacy, the inviolability of official communications and the need to safeguard the peaceful nature of cyberspace.

Thank you.