



I. Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

As our world becomes ever more interconnected, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) become more and more important. They form the foundation our modern life is built upon. Synchronously to our growing dependence on ICT, the protection of our critical infrastructure that enables us to use ICTs (e.g., telecommunication and internet cables, satellites, etc.), the set of rules managing responsible state behavior regarding the use of ICTs as well as our response to cybercrime must also strengthen.

At the end of 2021 General Assembly Resolution 76/19 on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies” was adopted.¹ In it, the General Assembly expresses concern that ICTs can potentially be misused for means that can threaten international peace and security.² Furthermore, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security presented its report to the General Assembly in 2021.³ Amongst the content of the report are for instance findings on existing and emerging threats as well as needed confidence-building measures.⁴ One of the risks mentioned by the report is the fact that several Member States are developing ICT capabilities for military purposes.⁵ Meanwhile, our critical infrastructure is highly vulnerable to harmful ICT activity.⁶ Fittingly, as stated by the American technology company Microsoft, in 2022 the absolute number of nation-state attacks on ICTs or ICT-dependent infrastructure detected by the company has risen dramatically.⁷ Microsoft mainly attributes the trend to the Russian Federation’s goal of damaging Ukrainian infrastructure, but also mentions Iran, North Korea, and China as contributors.⁸ Additionally, those attacks are increasingly targeting critical infrastructure.⁹ The share of those nation-state attacks targeted against critical infrastructure on all nation-state attacks has risen from 20% to 40%, when comparing the period from July 2020 to June 2021 to the period from July 2021 to June 2022.¹⁰ Microsoft additionally published a more detailed report on the matter.¹¹ Furthermore, according to the above mentioned GGE’s report not only do state actors pose an ever more pressing threat against ICTs or ICT-dependent infrastructure but also terrorist attacks against such targets carried out by non-state actors are increasingly likely in the future.¹²

Two reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, in which Member States were able to express their views on the topic, have been published in 2021 and 2022.¹³ As expressed in the more

¹ UN General Assembly. *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies (A/RES/76/19)*. 2021.

² Ibid.

³ UN General Assembly. *Report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (A/76/135)*. 2021.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Burt. Microsoft. *Nation-state cyberattacks become more brazen as authoritarian leaders’ rump up aggression, 2022*

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Microsoft. *Microsoft Digital Defense Report 2022*. 2022.

¹² UN General Assembly. *Report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (A/76/135)*. 2021.

¹³ UN General Assembly. *Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security: Report of the Secretary General (A/76/187)*. 2021; UN General Assembly, *Developments in the field of*



recent one, Ukraine as well as other Member States and the European Union (EU), call all Member States and relevant actors to adhere to international rules and norms managing the usage of ICTs.¹⁴ Alarming, according to their viewpoint, ICTs are already a tool actively used in practice in malicious ways by some Member States.¹⁵ The EU even goes as far as saying that the irresponsible behavior by the Russian Federation in cyberspace is an integral part of its invasion of Ukraine.¹⁶ In opposition to the other Member States and other actors mentioned above, the Russian Federation calls for digital sovereignty, stating that every Member States should have the right to implement their own regulation as it wishes.¹⁷

As already mentioned above, the Russian war in Ukraine so far involved a number of massive cyberattacks¹⁸ that not only targeted actors in Member States directly involved in the war but also many located in Member States that are officially not part of it.¹⁹ Some even go as far as calling it the first full-scale cyberwar.²⁰ The Russian war in Ukraine has furthermore proven that due to the internet and the increasing ubiquity of digital technologies anything from water supplies to banking services can and will be weaponized.²¹ Here, strong international norms and rules are needed to avoid the unnecessary suffering of civilians.²²

In September 2022, Ukraine and the EU held their second round of the Cybersecurity Dialogue.²³ Both are for instance working together to implement Ukraine's 2021-2025 Cybersecurity Strategy.²⁴ The EU has furthermore just released a major initiative to strengthen its own resilience against cyberattacks.²⁵ The Network and Information Security Directive 2 (NIS 2.0) will bring the EU on one level with the United States and other countries in mandating more stringent incident reporting requirements.²⁶

Another main battlefield in cyber space delegates should investigate is Taiwan. According to a member of the Taiwanese parliament Taiwan is the target of about 20 million cyberattacks per day, most of which coming from China.²⁷ When the then Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan in August 2022 the volume of cyberattacks on Taiwan government units at times even surpassed 15,000 gigabits per day according to Taiwan's digital minister Audrey Tang, therefore setting a new daily record.²⁸

As should be clear by now, the stakes are rising as the world seems to move to a dangerous new age of warfare that has the potential to have a high impact on civilians even outside the actual warzone.

information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies: Report of the Secretary-General (A/77/92). 2022.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly. *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies: Report of the Secretary-General (A/77/92)*. 2022.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ CyberPeace Institute. *Ukraine: Timeline of Cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and civilian objects*. 2022.

¹⁹ Microsoft. *Microsoft Digital Defense Report 2022*. 2022

²⁰ Dickinson. Atlantic Council. *Vladimir Putin's Ukraine invasion is the world's first full-scale cyberwar*. 2022.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Kharel. Global Campus of Human Rights. *The Proliferation of Cyber War and International Humanitarian Law*. 2022.

²³ European Union External Action. European Union. *Ukraine and EU held the second round of the UA-EU Cybersecurity Dialogue*. 2022.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ World Economic Forum. *How the EU's new directive aims to strengthen cybersecurity*. 2022.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Farmer. CBC News. *China's cyber assault on Taiwan*. 2022.

²⁸ Coghill, et al. Reuters Media. *From 7-11s to train stations, cyberattacks plague Taiwan over Pelosi visit*. 2022.



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II. Continued Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)

Despite the historic decline of global poverty, in 2022 more than 10 percent of the world's population still lives on less than \$1.90 a day.²⁹ Moreover, the 25 years of steady progress towards poverty reduction has come to an end due to COVID-19, which resulted in the global poverty rate rising from 8.3 per cent in 2019 to 9.2 per cent in 2020.³⁰ Rising inflation, climate change, and the impact of the war in Ukraine will worsen these trends, leading to an estimated 75-95 million more people living in extreme poverty by 2022.³¹ Developing countries are most at risk of combined social and economic crises, owing to their lack of access to social protection.³²

The Seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly took place in 2021, where the Secretary-General presented his report on the *Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty*³³ and on *Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.³⁴ The reports exemplify a concerted effort to address global poverty by Member States and provide over 60 key actions, including international cooperation with stakeholders, strengthening fundings, raising public awareness, improving the quality of and access to education as well as strengthening effort on sustainable development.³⁵ At the ongoing Seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, opened in September 2022, the Secretary-General will present his report on *Eradication of poverty and other development issues* focusing on “the gaps, challenges, and progress made in the implementation of the Third Decade, including COVID-19-related aspects, effects and response”.³⁶

The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) is being held in two parts.³⁷ The first session, which took place in 2022, focused on the adoption of the new Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), and the second part will take place in March 2023.³⁸ The six key focus areas of the joint conference are the following topics:

1. Investing in people, eradicating poverty and building capacity;
2. Leveraging the power of science, technology and innovation;
3. Supporting structural transformation as a driver of prosperity;
4. Enhancing international trade and regional integration;
5. Tackling climate change, COVID-19 & building resilience;
6. Mobilizing international partnerships for sustainable graduation.³⁹

²⁹ UN Global Compact. *Strong markets and strong societies go hand in hand*. 2022.

³⁰ Sustainable Development Goals. *Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere*. 2022.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ UN General Assembly. *Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027). Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/536)*. 2021. p.1.

³⁴ UN General Assembly. *Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/189)*. 2021. p.1.

³⁵ Ibid. p.1.

³⁶ Ibid. p.15.

³⁷ UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries. *Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)*. 2022.

³⁸ UN. 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5). *LDC5: From potential to prosperity*. 2022.

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The conference aims to fully implement the DPoA and support the least developed countries in addressing the ongoing crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the resulting negative socio-economic impact, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴⁰

In the draft resolution about the topic *Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)*, the General Assembly Second Committee on 15 November 2022 supports the idea to build up an inter-agency system to fight global poverty.⁴¹ For this, to function efficiently, the Member States should be supported in a previous step to be able to develop a universal-detection-system with reliable statistical data.⁴² Among other things, this will help to identify and combat the roots of poverty.⁴³ Especially the sustainable recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic should be used to fight multidimensional poverty especially in developing countries. For this purpose, it is recommended that a comprehensive exchange of knowledge and investments of the Member States, but also of the UN institutions, as well as the programs and funds in the areas of sustainable agriculture and food security, health coverage, quality education take place.⁴⁴ The cooperation should be carried out by industrialized nations, but also countries of the global south.⁴⁵

In conclusion, it can be said that, as things stand at present, it will not be possible to limit global extreme poverty to the extent planned by 2030.⁴⁶ Also with regard to the UN Development Agenda, poverty reduction should be given the highest priority, since poverty is the trigger for many far-reaching problems such as hunger, lack of education, social injustice and lower life expectancy.⁴⁷

For further research, try to find out if your country is affected by poverty? Is your country participating in national or international partnerships and programs to fight extreme poverty (long- and short-term)? What could be the best way to fight poverty.

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⁴² Ibid. p. 6.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 12.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 7.



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III. Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

During the last years, the UN system as well as private organizations have furthered the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Among these efforts, the most recent report of the Secretary-General with its recommendations, the Resolution of the General Assembly on Vision Impairment as well as several summits like the Global Disability Summit deserve to be highlighted.

On 20 July 2022, the Secretary-General of the United Nations issued a report regarding the situation of persons with disabilities and inclusive development.⁴⁸ The report also deals with the ongoing efforts by the international community to advance disability inclusion in the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and to build back better toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable world.⁴⁹ The Secretary-General encouraged Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies that address the context-specific barriers to disability-inclusive development.⁵⁰ He further recommended the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their rights, well-being and perspectives into national policies, laws, programs and guidelines to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and for the national, regional and global implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁵¹ Moreover, he advises to bring persons with disabilities to the forefront of decision-making in the socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, to support private and public sector in creating an environment in which people with disabilities can reasonably work from home, to increase disability benefits and raise awareness of them through online campaigns and to ensure the accessibility of distance learning for people with disabilities.⁵² Furthermore, the public health coverage and accessibility of public health should be extended.⁵³ The access to affordable internet for people with disabilities as well as prioritization of persons with disabilities in situations of crisis should be ensured according to the Secretary-General.⁵⁴ Additionally, qualitative and quantitative data on the situation of persons with disabilities in administrative data systems should be collected in order to promote disability-inclusive policies and programs.⁵⁵ Finally, the Secretary-General suggests that the representation and effective participation of women with disabilities in their diversity at all levels in all areas of life shall be ensured and multi-stakeholder partnerships shall be strengthened.⁵⁶

1.1 billion people suffer from vision loss, 43 million of those are completely blind.⁵⁷ The number of people with vision loss is even projected to grow to 1.758 billion people until 2050.⁵⁸ Accordingly, the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 23 July 2021, is of high relevance to the issue of disabilities.⁵⁹ The General Assembly recognized the contributions of persons with disabilities are

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary-General regarding the Inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities (A/77/166)*. 2022. p.1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p.1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.17.

⁵² *Ibid.* p.17.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p.17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp.17-18.

⁵⁵ The Global Disability Summit. *Co-Chairs' Summary*. 2022, p.2.

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary-General regarding the Inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities (A/77/166)*. 2022. p.18.

⁵⁷ The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). *Globally, 1.1 billion people live with vision loss*. 2022.

⁵⁸ The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). *Projected Change in Vision Loss 2020 to 2050*. 2022.

⁵⁹ UN General Assembly. *Vision for Everyone (A/RES/75/310)*. 2021.



important to the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.⁶⁰ It further noted the need for Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to further strengthen the normative framework on disability, including the rights of persons with disabilities, in line with the pledge of leaving no one behind.⁶¹ Moreover, it expressed that it considers disability a global issue, cutting across the pillars of the United Nations.⁶² Moreover, the General Assembly expressed its concern that the burden of eye health conditions has a disproportionate impact on people in vulnerable situations, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, local communities, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants and therefore is slowing the progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries).⁶³ Furthermore, the General Assembly called upon its Member States as well as other stakeholders to include persons with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, in all stages of policymaking and decision-making, as well as to eliminate barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls and those in vulnerable situations, in accessing support and health-care services on an equal basis with others.⁶⁴

The International Disability Alliance (IDA), the Government of Norway, and the Government of Ghana hosted the second Global Disability Summit on 16 and 17 February 2022 (GDS2022).⁶⁵ The Secretary-General of the United Nations, high-level representatives from UN member states, heads of UN organizations and representatives of multilateral development banks, the private sector, organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations and academics participated in the Summit.⁶⁶ The participants of the Summit acknowledged the progress made in the decade since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) but also pointed to the need for intensified efforts to generate change through implementation of the Convention and fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁶⁷ During the 2022 Summit, participants reaffirmed their understanding that political will and leadership generate lasting and meaningful change for persons with disabilities.⁶⁸ The participants underlined the need to build back better, and for pandemic recovery measures to ensure that systems and societies are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.⁶⁹ In addition to many other commitments and affirmations, the participants held that the GDS commitment tracking system should serve as the platform where all parties can share their progress.⁷⁰

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⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 1.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 1.

⁶² Ibid. p. 1.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 3.

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⁶⁶ Ibid. p.1.

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