

Delegation from South Africa
Position Paper for the *General Assembly First Committee*

The topics before the General Assembly First Committee are Artificial Intelligence and the International System and Cybercrimes and Human Security. South Africa acknowledges the need for international discussion and cooperation to ensure appropriate use of technology, and looks forward to discussing these topics with fellow member states.

I. Artificial Intelligence and the International System

It is anticipated that the growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will increase yearly by 37.3% from 2023 to 2030. The continued increase of AI in recent years has created opportunities for employment in previously undiscovered areas. AI has also benefited access to knowledge, with various systems such as ChatGPT providing accessible access to information. While considering the positives of AI, some negative consequences have emerged from its utilization. Human rights violations are a concern with the use of AI. This enhanced technology can lead to authoritarianism and the collection of private information that infringes on personal security and safety. South Africa is committed to enhancing the use of AI in a just way that enhances economic prosperity while upholding human rights around the world.

As stated by Minister Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, the increased use and progression of AI has the “potential of increasing the production in raw materials that are in abundance in Africa and leapfrog key productions in Africa.” South Africa expresses its growing interest in embracing artificial intelligence as a transformative tool for national and global economic development and innovation. The South African government has recognized the potential for AI in addressing societal challenges, fostering economic growth, and improving public services. The government of South Africa aims to leverage AI to enhance various sectors such as healthcare, education, and agriculture, to contribute to the country’s socio-economic development. The country affirms the importance of collaboration between government, industry, and academia to build a competitive and ethically grounded AI system. South Africa expresses its commitment to ensuring that AI benefits all citizens and is used responsibly; this includes addressing ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and potential job displacement.

The South African government recognizes the global impact of AI and strives to meaningfully contribute to international discussions and collaborations in this field; as such, the nation positions itself within the international system by advocating for a balanced and inclusive approach to AI. South Africa supports international efforts to establish ethical guidelines and norms for AI development and deployment. The government is committed to fostering cooperation with other nations, organizations, and stakeholders to address common challenges associated with AI, including ethical considerations, data privacy, and human rights implications. South Africa emphasizes the importance of ensuring that AI technologies benefit all countries, especially those in the developing world. The nation advocates for a global AI ecosystem that promotes fairness, inclusivity, and sustainability. In this context, South Africa participates in international forums and engages in diplomatic efforts to shape the discourse on AI governance and regulation. As AI transcends national borders, South Africa recognizes the need for a coordinated and collaborative approach to navigate the complex ethical, legal, and socio-economic implications.

II. Cybercrimes and Human Security

In 2022, approximately 800 000 people around the world were targets of successful cybercrime scams. This has drastic implications for the safety and security of citizens around the world. Elderly individuals are primarily at risk for victimhood as technology becomes more complicated to navigate with little education provided for digital media safety. South Africa hopes to engage in meaningful discussions on reducing the threat of cybercrimes in an ever evolving media-dependent world.

South Africa recognizes the evolving nature of cybersecurity threats and has implemented measures to protect individuals, businesses, and critical infrastructure from cyberattacks. To this end, South Africa has enacted legislation, including the Cybercrimes Act, which criminalizes various forms of cyber offenses, including unauthorized access to computer systems, data interference, and the distribution of malicious software. Regarding cybercrimes, South Africa has acknowledged the transnational nature of cyberthreats and has taken steps to align its cybersecurity policies with international standards. The nation actively participates in international efforts to combat cybercrime, emphasizing collaboration with other nations, law enforcement agencies, and global organizations. In the realm of human security, South Africa recognizes that cyber threats can have profound implications for individuals, including risks to personal safety, privacy, and economic well-being. Besides implementing legislative measures to address these concerns domestically, South Africa engages in international discussions on human security to share best practices and contribute to the development of global norms.

South Africa positions itself within the international system by recognizing the interconnected nature of cybercrimes, human security, and the need for global cooperation to address these challenges. South Africa's position within the international system underscores the importance of a coordinated approach to cybersecurity. The government acknowledges the need for a legal framework that aligns with international standards and facilitates cooperation in combating cybercrime. In terms of human security, South Africa considers cyber threats as potential risks to individuals' safety, privacy, and economic well-being. The South African government emphasizes awareness and education initiatives to empower citizens with the knowledge to protect themselves online. It also encourages collaboration between law enforcement agencies, the private sector, and international partners to enhance the capacity to respond to cyber threats effectively. South Africa is prepared to engage in international forums to address cyber threats collectively, recognizing that cybersecurity is a global concern that requires coordinated efforts. The nation advocates for a multilateral framework that promotes information sharing, capacity-building, and joint responses to cyber threats. South Africa also advocates for Member States to implement education on technology and how to use digital media safely. Furthermore, special attention should be focused on vulnerable populations that are most likely to be targets of cybercrimes, such as the elderly. Member States are encouraged to define cybercrimes clearly under the law to ensure those who violate human security are held accountable. Through international forums, South Africa seeks to shape global conversations on cybersecurity governance and contribute to the establishment of norms that enhance human security in the digital age.