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| **Council 2019Geneva, 10-20 June 2019** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.5** | **Document C19/58-E** |
| **6 May 2019** |
| **English only** |
| Report by the Secretary-General |
| TRANSMISSION OF the REPORT FROM THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF GCA HIGH‑LEVEL EXPERTS GROUP |

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| SummaryDuring the seventeenth Plenary meeting of PP-18, The **Secretary-General** noted with satisfaction that during the discussions on the draft resolution the value of the GCA had been widely recognized. He appealed to the Plenary to accept the retention of *resolves* 12.1, which would allow ITU to utilize the GCA to guide its work on confidence and security in ICTs. He would seek advice from the Council and from the former chairman of the High-Level Experts Group dealing with the GCA, Judge Stein Schjolberg, in that connection.Action requiredThe Council is invited to **note** the report.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_References[Document PP-18/174](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0174/en); [Document C19/INF/9](http://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-INF-0009/en) |

**Annex: 1**

ANNEX

**The Chairman’s 2019 Report**

**A REVIEWEDREPORT FROM THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF GCA HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS GROUP[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Stein Schjolberg,**

**Chief Judge (Ret.)**

**Norway**

April 30, 2019

**To**

**Secretary-General Houlin Zhao, ITU**

1. **Introduction**

The ITU 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference in Dubai adopted Resolution 130:*Strengthening the role of ITU in building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies***.** The Resolution resolves, inter alia, *to utilize the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) framework in order to further guide the work of the Union on efforts to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs.*

During the plenary discussions just prior to the adoption of Res. 130, the ITU Secretary-General *noted with satisfaction that during the discussions on the draft resolution the value of the GCA had been widely recognised. He appealed to the Plenary to accept the retention on resolves 12.1, which would allow ITU to utilize the GCA to guide its work on confidence and security in ICTs. He would seek advice from the Council and from the former chairman of the High-Level Experts Group dealing with the GCA, Judge Stein Schjolberg, in that connection.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

**Background**

The GCA is a framework for international cooperation aimed at enhancing confidence and security in the information society. The GCA is designed for cooperation and efficiency, encouraging collaboration with and between all relevant partners and building on existing initiatives to avoid duplicating efforts.

The GCA High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) was established in October 2007 to assist the ITU Secretary-General in developing strategic proposals for Member States on promoting cybersecurity. It was chaired by Judge Stein Schjolberg, from Norway, who had been working in the field of cybercrime legislation for more than 30 years. The work of HLEG relates to ITU’s role from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) as facilitator for its Action Line C5 on building confidence and security in the use of ICT. It centers upon ITU’s Global Cybersecurity Agenda, launched in May 2007, which comprises five strategic pillars: legal measures; technical and procedural measures; organizational structures; capacity building, and international cooperation.

The HLEG comprised of an independent multistakeholder global experts group of almost 100 individuals from around the world. The Group delivered their advices to the ITU Secretary-General on all strategic pillars in a Chairman’s Report on August 2008.[[3]](#footnote-3) As the Chairman of the GCA HLEG, Judge Stein Schjolberg sent the Report and the opening statement included as follows:

*The costs associated with cyberattacks are significant – in terms of lost revenue, loss of sensitive data, damage to equipment, denial-of-service attacks and network outages. The future growth and potential of the online information society are in danger from growing cyberthreats. Furthermore, cyberspace is borderless: cyberattacks can inflict immeasurable damage in different countries in a matter of minutes. Cyberthreats are a global problem and they need a global solution, involving all stakeholders.*

More than 10 years have passed since the HLEG Report was submitted. This report is based on reviewing some related developments since 2008.

**2 Continued Relevance and Importance of the GCA**

The framework offered by the five pillars of the GCA has been widely appreciated by ITU membership and has generally withstood the test of time and continues to offer a broad framework for international cooperation on cybersecurity, within the framework of the WSIS outcome documents, especially the principles outlined under Action Line C5. The related recommendations included in the Chairman’s Report of the 2008 HLEG are as relevant today as they were in 2008 (while recognizing that there have been a few specific aspects of the report that could be considered dated or have been superseded by other events).

The ICT landscape has of course changed drastically since 2008, with ICTs now driving every sector of society, and practically every critical infrastructure that a nation relies upon for its smooth functioning. We are witnessing the emergence and adoption of new technologies, e.g. with the wider adoption of the Internet of Things with tens, if not hundreds, of billions of new interconnected devices - opening up significant number of new potential vulnerabilities; the emergence of Artificial Intelligence as a tool to leverage data, especially Big Data, to allow humans to make more informed decisions as well as opening up the possibility of machines to make autonomous and so-called intelligent decisions on their own without human intervention – bringing up challenges of user privacy, security and trust, as well as those of the algorithms and tools; new communication technologies and standards such as 5G that allow communication at a speed exponentially greater than what is currently feasible; quantum computing that offer computing speeds way beyond current capabilities thereby offering great opportunities but also putting at risk current cryptographic algorithms among others. We have also observed the emergence of new security technologies such as Distributed Ledger Technologies (blockchains is one of its popular implementations) that offer significantly better means of safeguarding systems and associated data. Moreover, more and more countries around the world are now increasingly moving towards adoption of digital identity systems.

Additionally, a phenomenon that has significantly shaped the global ICT ecosystem since 2008 is the global wide-scale adoption of social networks. Some companies have more users than the population of many countries combined – e.g. Facebook has more than 2.3 billion users (March 2019). Social media has played a pivotal role in connecting people across the world, blurring geographical boundaries, and providing easy access to information and opportunities at a scale that did not exist earlier. It has also brought forth significant trust concerns - regarding privacy and security of users and the data they generate, authenticity and trust worthiness of the information available on social networks, dissemination of hateful content etc.

Overall there has been a global recognition of ICTs as a vital means of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and that for this to happen, it is important that people have trust and confidence in the use of ICTs.

Activities being implemented under the GCA have been evolving, taking into account the changing ICT landscape, including those undertaken by ITU[[4]](#footnote-4) within its mandate and under its role as the facilitator for WSIS Action Line C5.

The GCA has well served ITU’s efforts in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs. Within its mandate, guided by the GCA implementation, ITU has been working to bring different stakeholders together to collaborate on a number of crucial initiatives such as assisting countries with defining their national cybersecurity strategy, fortifying their infrastructure by developing and implementing international security standards , setting up their computer incident response teams, deploying initiatives to protect children online, and building the necessary human capacity and skills. Various multistakeholder initiatives such as the Child Online Protection have been launched under the GCA framework.

**3 Searching for a Common Ground on Cybersecurity**

Cybersecurity is prominent on the global agenda of Heads of State and World Leaders, as well as CEOs of Private Sector Companies, and Heads of International and Civil Society organizations around the world. As indicated above, there are several commendable initiatives in progress, initiated by different stakeholder groups. Some regional and global developments since 2008 are included in [Document INF/9](http://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-INF-0009/en).

Despite this, there is a growing trust deficit in cyberspace. A concern that has been voiced repeatedly is the need for greater coherence and cohesion in initiatives so that they can have maximum impact. This should remain the main focus of ITU - serving in its role as the facilitator for WSIS Action Line C5.

The GCA pillars and recommendations, especially those related to international cooperation, should continue to be utilized as the framework guiding the Union in its related coordination efforts.

In order to bring greater clarity and effectiveness in the implementation of the GCA recommendations taking into consideration the complexity of the issues involved in the fast-changing ICT ecosystem, further elaboration of appropriate guidelines for utilization of the GCA may be needed.

As the chairman of the 2008 HLEG, I am available to advise the ITU Secretary-General in any related effort.

1. The information contained in this Report has been initiated and contributed by the GCA HLEG Chairman, on the basis of information that is publicly available. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author only. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Minutes of the Plenipotentiary Seventeenth Plenary Meeting, Dubai, Thursday 15 November 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Judge Stein Schjolberg, Norway: Report from the Chairman of HLEG: <https://www.itu.int/en/action/cybersecurity/Pages/gca.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See ITU’s annual activities report to ITU Council on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)