

**Remarks by Sergey Lavrov
at the opening of the first substantive session of the
UN Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a
Comprehensive International Convention on
Countering the Use of Information and
Communications Technologies for
Criminal Purposes**

(28 February 2022)

I extend my greetings to the participants of the first substantive session of the UN Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.

The establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee to develop this kind of international legal instrument was the need of the hour. Crime in cyberspace has a truly global character. The world community is facing a real "cyberpandemic." Cybercriminals are capable of inflicting serious damage on economic activities of States and the wellbeing of millions of people. The numbers speak for themselves. While in 2018, as estimated by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the annual damage amounted to 1.5 trillion US dollars, in 2025 this figure may reach 9 trillion.

The situation is seriously aggravated by shortcomings in national legislations and insufficiently effective system of international cooperation in this area. The relevant applicable instruments were drawn up a decade or two ago and objectively fail to keep up with the activities of cybercriminals, especially given the specifics of such crimes, which are often committed remotely, including from the territories of other countries.

Obviously, no State can fight this problem alone. It requires concerted international efforts, with a central coordinating role played by the United Nations. In light of this, Russia was the first to raise the question about the development,

under the UN auspices, of a comprehensive convention to counter crimes related to the use of information and communications technologies.

We are pleased to note the consensus reached in the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 75/282 setting out the modalities of the practical work of the Ad Hoc Committee, which was created to prepare a future international treaty.

It is quite possible to accomplish this ambitious task within the two years allotted for its fulfillment. The international community already has experience in developing such universal instruments for combating crime. Rejection of politicized approaches and bloc discipline, pragmatism, and focus on the results are key to success.

As the initiator of the whole process, Russia contributed to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at the very beginning of its activities by drawing up a full-length draft convention. The draft reflects many of the norms already approved within the relevant branches of international law. It ensures the balance between practical objectives and respect for the principles of sovereignty of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and protection of human rights. The document's provisions on rendering technical assistance to developing countries and building their technological capacities deserve special attention.

I would like to particularly emphasize that our goal is to achieve a balance in the system of multilateral cooperation, to make it universal and more efficient, strengthening the capabilities of all States without exception in countering criminal use of information and communications technologies.

I wish the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee and all its members fruitful discussions and all the best.