Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Africa Group, I will make the following general remarks on the provisions of technical assistance.

The Africa Group wishes to underscore that building capacity is a prerequisite to fight cybercrime and the different uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for criminal purposes. In light of the complexity and aggressive transnational nature of cybercrime, technical assistance and capacity-building are critical in strengthening national capacity across operational areas. Due to the digital divide, several countries suffer from a deficit in national capacity to investigate cybercrime in terms of human, financial, and technical resources. The absence or inadequacy of necessary funds, qualified personnel, and technical equipment and tools to conduct cybercrime investigations, universal digital forensics and evidence standards and protocols, which ensure the admissibility of digital evidence in the national courts, also compound the situation.
Madam Chair

To prevent and combat cybercrime, the future Convention should, therefore, provide a framework that provides national governmental experts long-term capacity building and training programmes to strengthen their capacity to detect and investigate cybercrime. Such capacity-building should address the needs of developing countries, focus on the vulnerabilities of each country in order to provide tailor-made technical assistance and promote the exchange of the most up-to-date knowledge to law enforcement practitioners and stakeholders.

In this endeavour, we could draw inspiration from the agreed recommendations of the *seventh session of the Open-ended intergovernmental Expert Group to conduct a Comprehensive study on cybercrime*. The agreed recommendations outlined initiatives aimed at building and strengthening national competencies for enhanced high-level communication, sharing of best practices, timely sharing of information, research and training programmes, material and templates for cooperation and the provision of modern equipment to help developing countries achieve the objectives of the Convention.

Training should be comprehensive and inclusive for law enforcement agencies, legislators, policy-makers, custom personnel, investigators and forensic analysts. Enhanced financial and material assistance should be promoted to assist and support developing countries to implement the future Convention. To make the future Convention, truly fit-for-purpose, there should also be emphasis on facilitating extradition on expedited basis, mutual legal assistance and joint investigation mechanisms.

Drawing from regional instruments seeking to promote the inclusion of gender in combating crime in all its forms, consideration should be given to prioritising vulnerable people such as women, the youth and the elderly in capacity-building programmes to strengthen institutional capabilities. Women, the youth and the elderly have increasingly become the target for cybercriminals. Exchange of educational programmes on the risks of exposure to cybercrime coupled with information and awareness campaigns are necessary for these categories of persons.
Madam Chair,

The Africa Group underscores the importance of adequate, predictable and stable funding for technical assistance for developing countries, upon request. In the same vein, the Group emphasizes the need for efficient utilization of such resources to ensure long-term sustainability in the implementation of the future Convention. To this end, reference should be made to UNTOC Articles 29 and 30 on training and technical assistance as well as other applicable regional instruments.

Madam Chair,

In closing, I would like to stress the fact that cybercrime cannot be defeated by any single government or authority. It is only through our collective efforts, commitment and collaboration backed by necessary competencies that we will be able to attain the objectives of the future Convention.

I Thank you