

Launch of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise

16 April 2015

The Hague Declaration on the GFCE

1. Today, we, governments, intergovernmental organisations and private companies, meet to launch the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise. We recognise and welcome that societies are becoming increasingly digitized, interconnected and dependent on the cyber domain for communication, innovation and sustainable social development and economic growth. We acknowledge that this creates opportunities that should be accessible for every individual worldwide.
2. To fully reap the benefits of information and communication technology, further investments are needed to ensure a free, open and secure cyberspace. As a consequence, inclusive and greater collaboration in the area of capacity building and exchange of expertise within the cyber domain is rapidly becoming one of the most important topics on the international cyber agenda, as was also noted in the 2013 Seoul Framework for and Commitment to Open and Secure Cyberspace.
3. As societies need to rapidly develop their capacity to take full advantage of cyberspace and need to overcome evolving challenges presented in this field, we all face financial and human resource constraints. We need to find better and smarter ways to work together by fostering existing and building new partnerships, establishing best practices and providing assistance to one another.
4. We stand committed to strengthening this cooperation on cyber by creating more opportunities for governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and academia from various regions of the world to engage and develop innovative solutions to this truly global challenge. We recognise the growing number of players in the field with relevant cyber experience and expertise, and we seek to make best use of these assets through closer cooperation.
5. We emphasise the need to strengthen and reinforce the existing framework of international cooperation and build new partnerships, enhance institutional capacity where it is most needed. We seek to develop a mutually reinforcing relationship with relevant multilateral institutions and develop practitioner networks that will have an enduring impact on global cyber capacity.
6. As a concrete sign of our unified and firm commitment to strengthen cyber capacity and expertise and to make the existing international cooperative efforts in this field more effective, we hereby establish the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (hereinafter: GFCE).

Objectives

7. The GFCE will create a pragmatic, action-oriented and flexible forum. It will be consistent with, complement and reinforce existing bilateral, multilateral, multi-party, regional and international efforts to build cyber capacity and expertise and avoid duplication and overlap. The efforts undertaken within the framework of the GFCE will be consistent with international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, where appropriate.

8. The GFCE's overarching and long term goal is to strengthen cyber capacity and expertise globally.
9. To this end, the GFCE's primary objective is to provide a dedicated, informal platform for policymakers, practitioners and experts from different countries and regions to facilitate:
 - a) Sharing experience, expertise, best practices and assessments on key regional and thematic cyber issues. The initial focus areas for capacity and expertise building are cyber security, cybercrime, data protection and e-governance;
 - b) Identifying gaps in global cyber capacity and develop innovative solutions to challenges;
 - c) Contributing to existing efforts and mobilise additional resources and expertise to build global cyber capacity in partnership with and according to the particular needs of interested countries, upon their request.
10. Acknowledging that our participation in the GFCE is voluntary and not a legally binding commitment, we have established a framework document that will allow the GFCE to operate in a flexible, transparent and inclusive manner.
11. We plan to hold a high level meeting every year, in which we will discuss the achievements within the GFCE, including Initiatives taken, share experiences and lessons learned, and decide upon the way forward, preferably within the margins of the Global Conferences on Cyberspace. Non-members are welcome to take part in the discussions during these meetings. Civil society, the technical community and academia will be encouraged to participate and contribute to these discussions.
12. A small administrative unit will provide secretarial, communications and logistical support, and will prepare, in coordination with future hosts of the Global Conferences on Cyberspace, the annual high level meeting. This secretariat will initially be hosted and financed by the Netherlands.