Conseil de sécurité

Lettre datée du 4 juin 2021, adressée au Président du Conseil de sécurité par le Représentant permanent de la Chine auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies

Les Missions permanentes de l'Afrique du Sud, de la Chine, de l'Égypte, des Émirats arabes unis, du Kenya et du Mexique ont organisé le 17 mai 2021 une réunion selon la formule Arria relative à l'impact des technologies nouvelles sur la paix et la sécurité internationales.

Vous trouverez ci-joint le résumé que la présidence a fait de la réunion (voir annexe)∗. Je vous serais reconnaissant de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte de la présente lettre et de son annexe comme document du Conseil de sécurité.

L'Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire,
Représentant permanent
de la République populaire de Chine
auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies
(*Signé*) **Zhang** Jun

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∗ L'annexe est distribuée uniquement dans la langue de l'original.

Annexe à la lettre datée du 4 juin 2021 adressée au Président du Conseil de sécurité par le Représentant permanent de la Chine auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies

Arria-formula meeting on the impact of emerging technologies on international peace and security

Chair's summary

I. Introduction

On 17 May 2021, the Permanent Missions of the People's Republic of China, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Kenya, Mexico, the Republic of South Africa and the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations hosted an Arria-formula meeting on the impact of emerging technologies on international peace and security. The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Zhang Jun, the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations. Representatives from nearly 40 countries, including Security Council members, delivered statements at the meeting. The virtual meeting was also live-streamed through United Nations Web TV.

The meeting was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Officer-in-Charge in the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Technology, Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, and a Senior Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Vincent Boulanin.

A concept note was released prior to the discussion, providing the background. It recognized that the rapid development of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, digital technology, biotechnology and material technology, has been constantly transforming traditional industries, promoting economic development and improving production and human lives. While acknowledging the positive effects of emerging technologies, their potential adverse impacts should not be neglected. The United Nations has never overlooked the issue of emerging technologies. The Secretary-General made "seizing the opportunities of digital technology while protecting against their growing dangers" one of the 10 priorities of the work of the United Nations in 2021 and appointed an envoy on technology to implement the Road Map for Digital Cooperation. There is a consensus on the increasing importance of comprehensively addressing from the United Nations the opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technologies. The Security Council should pay more attention to the impact of emerging technologies on the issues being addressed on its agenda, especially peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and non-proliferation.

The meeting aims to deepen understanding of emerging technologies and to call upon the international community to strengthen discussion and coordination of their development and application. It is also designed to raise awareness of the impacts of emerging technologies on international peace and security and to call for efforts to prevent and mitigate the potential risks and conflicts caused by the application of emerging technologies.

Guiding questions for the meeting included: How to seize the opportunities brought by the rapid development of emerging technologies and respond to the challenges? How can the Security Council use emerging technologies to better perform its duty of maintaining international peace and security? What further steps can be taken to promote a holistic approach of the United Nations system on the issue

of emerging technologies and work out an integrated strategy to bridge the technology gap among countries? How can we best carry out discussions on emerging technologies through multilateral mechanisms with the broadest representation to forge international consensus and promote the interests of humankind?

II. Summary of discussion

1. Highlights of the briefings

Ms. Nakamitsu gave an overview of both the opportunities and challenges posed by various fields of emerging technologies. She stated, as noted by the Secretary-General, that scientific developments could accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promote the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time, some development of emerging technologies came with potentially grave implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. She emphasized that the regime governing this domain was not sufficiently developed, possible solutions to those challenges could involve a combination of binding and voluntary norms, rules and principles, and it remained imperative that States develop concrete measures to ensure that humans remained in control of the use of lethal force. The United Nations had a central role both in ensuring that the benefits of emerging technologies could be fully realized and in addressing the challenges and risks that they posed. International instruments and bodies were indeed already engaging in most of those matters, and the engagement of the Security Council was paramount.

Ms. Spatolisano recalled that the Secretary-General had launched his Road Map for Digital Cooperation last June and that narrowing the digital divide and ensuring a people-centred approach was critical. She highlighted the need for a broader, more holistic approach to tackle the challenges of emerging technologies, including protecting human rights online and addressing increasing online fragmentation. The Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Technology worked closely with United Nations entities to implement the Road Map, including on universal connectivity and digital capacity-building. While Governments remained at the centre, multi-stakeholder involvement was needed for inclusive, effective decisions and policies regarding what had become a public good.

Mr. Boulanin reported that there were notable cross-cutting trends in technology development, including the rapid pace and convergence of innovation and the increasing role that private actors played in the development and diffusion of some technologies, which might bring problems to their governance. He emphasized that there were many active conversations and processes dedicated to the governance of emerging technologies, some of which had proposed to elaborate a series of ethical principles. He also saw value in developing a forum or a process that could help to connect the work already undertaken and provide cross-cutting guidance and training on responsible research and innovation.

2. Main points from the discussion

- Emerging technologies are transforming all aspects of our societies, which can be powerful tools for good. The development and innovation of emerging technologies improve the quality of life of our people and provide sustainable solutions to global challenges, including helping us to fight coronavirus disease (COVID-19) through new vaccines, immensely contributing to economic development and improving the ability of countries to respond to global issues, such as food security, climate change and energy crises, and representing a

significant opportunity to achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

• There is potential for emerging technologies to improve the work of the Security Council in peacekeeping and counter-terrorism. The use of emerging technologies in United Nations peacekeeping operations can improve operational efficiency and reduce the security risks of peacekeepers, as well as in terms of protecting local civilian populations. Emerging technologies expand the toolbox of counter-terrorism instruments in terms of analysis and surveillance and help people to better understand the motivations and factors contributing to radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism. Artificial intelligence and other digital tools can enable more efficient humanitarian assistance.

• The misuse of emerging technologies brings challenges to all countries, and the race for cutting-edge technology research and development can accentuate strategic competition. Using the emerging technologies in military operations can fall below traditional thresholds for an armed attack and trigger tensions and conflicts. Greater attention must also be paid to the use by terrorists of emerging technologies to spread disinformation, incite hate speech, lead to violence and pursue recruitment, and to the risk of proliferation of emerging technologies by non-State actors so as to prevent emerging technologies from becoming new means of crime. The Security Council must pay more attention to these issues.

• The international community should foster collaboration, innovation and inclusivity in technology development while ensuring that technology usage is in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and respects human rights, privacy protections and the rule of law.

• Unequal access to emerging technologies creates new dividing lines. We should promote the prosperity of emerging technologies based on affordable and accessible innovation and assist developing countries in building their capacities, facilitating the flow of technology and bridging the technology divide, including between genders, to ensure that emerging technologies are shared equitably and benefit all countries, not just a select few.

• Countries should advocate an open mind and equal and mutually beneficial cooperation and should avoid blockades and barriers to technology. Unilateralism, protectionism and the monopoly and hegemony of technology should not be allowed. The development and use of emerging technologies require openness, transparency and integrity, and a human-centric approach, in parallel with promoting trust and security, should be adopted. The active participation of multiple stakeholders in dialogue and cooperation, including international, regional and subregional organizations, is greatly encouraged. Academia, civil society and the private sector must be involved in those multilateral forums.

• The international community needs to work towards building common ground and consensus so as to mitigate risks from this rapidly evolving realm of emerging technologies to international peace and security. It is necessary to establish an inclusive and transparent framework to further discuss the rules, norms and principles and to promote global governance of emerging technologies. All States are entitled to the opportunity to participate in the process of norm shaping. Several intergovernmental United Nations entities have taken positive steps in this regard.

• Emerging technologies bring global challenges, which need a global response through strong multilateralism. The United Nations should play a central and leading role in the process of international exchange and cooperation. Agencies and platforms of the United Nations that are working on this issue need to

strengthen coordination to achieve synergy and to maximize opportunities for all States to benefit from the progress offered by technological developments.