

Speech H.E. Louis Piët at the EU International Cybercrime Conference, titled 'Assessing the Threat of Cybercrime' 26 March 2015, BMICH, Colombo

Honorable Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, honorable deputy minister, honorable justices, your Excellencies, Madam chairperson, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Let me first of all congratulate Sri Lanka on receiving the invitation from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to join the Budapest Convention. The Netherlands has always been a staunch supporter of Sri Lanka joining the Budapest Convention so we rejoice with you!

The timing of this success seems auspicious for two reasons. Firstly it coincides with a political sea change in the country that has strongly reinforced the independence of the judiciary and the law enforcement authorities, entities that will benefit from the capacity building programs under the Convention. Secondly the timing is auspicious because it precedes the fourth Global Conference on Cyberspace (GCCS) which will be hosted by the Netherlands in The Hague on 16 and 17 April. Several of the attendants present here today, including the honorable acting Foreign Minister who will be leading the delegation, will be participating in this Conference in The Hague next month. Lessons learned at this Conference can be shared at that occasion.

Honorable Minister, ladies and gentlemen, the world is increasingly connected. More and more we live, work, communicate, buy and exist in cyber space. The internet is creating extraordinary opportunities for economic growth and social development and has become a vital part of all societies around the world.

With opportunities **new challenges** emerge as well. How do we keep the internet secure while safeguarding free and open access? How do we protect our privacy while enabling effective action against **cyber crime**? How do we sustain the agility and vibrancy of the net as governments demand a bigger role in the running of the net? And how do we ensure that the net does not create a digital divide but rather becomes a force for development.

In the last decade cyberspace has become more and more crowded. An increasing amount of governments, industries and individuals are claiming and expanding their online presence. The world wide web has been around for many years, but only now we experience a world wide web that is truly globally netted.

With cyberspace becoming increasingly populated, it is a continuous challenge to safeguard our cyber security while maintaining an open and innovative digital domain. The number of threats are keeping up, if not accelerate, with the scaling of the internet. In this context I would like to mention particularly the threats to children and more specifically sexual abuse by using the internet. Furthermore inherent shortcomings or flaws in the architecture and use of the domain are surfacing more frequently.

In order to continue to respond to these cyber threats **international cooperation** is indispensable. The fact that also this particular conference on the threat of cyber crime is attended by delegates from 17 countries and that policies and strategies in fighting cyber crime will be discussed is very encouraging.

The Internet can unlock enormous potential gains in wealth and welfare in an increasingly interconnected global society. In order to continue to benefit from the potential of the Internet as a driver for development and innovation, we must develop safer ways to do business online, protect our citizens from threats to the exercise of their online freedoms and from cybercrime, and work together to secure international stability in cyberspace.

We believe that working together on a global, multi-stakeholder scale is the only way to guarantee that the most crucial piece of 21st century societal infrastructure remains free, open and secure and can be used to its full potential. This is the Netherlands' mission as host of the fourth Global Conference on Cyberspace and I trust it is the mission for the current conference on the threat of cyber crime as well.

As the representative of The Netherlands I therefore wish all the participants a very fruitful and productive conference and I sincerely hope that your conclusions will be available in The Hague and will inspire the debate in April.