

Half of all countries aware but lacking national plan on cybersecurity, UN agency reports

5 July 2017 – Only about half of all countries have a cybersecurity strategy or are in the process of developing one, the United Nations telecommunications agency today reported, urging more countries to consider national policies to protect against cybercrime.

Releasing its second [Global Cybersecurity Index \(GCI\)](#), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) said about 38 per cent of countries have a published cybersecurity strategy and an additional 12 per cent of governments are in the process of developing one.

The agency said more effort is needed in this critical area, particularly since it conveys that governments consider digital risks high priority.

“Cybersecurity is an ecosystem where laws, organizations, skills, cooperation and technical implementation need to be in harmony to be most effective,” stated the report, adding that cybersecurity is “becoming more and more relevant in the minds of countries’ decision makers.”

The top 10 most committed countries include three from Asia and the Pacific, two each from Europe and the Americas, and one from Africa, the Arab States, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

They are, in order: Singapore, United States, Malaysia, Oman, Estonia, Mauritius, Australia, Georgia, France and Canada. Russia ranked 11th.

In addition to showing the overall cybersecurity commitment of ITU’s 193 member States, the Index also shows the improvement and strengthening of the five pillars of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda: legal, technical, organizational, capacity building and international cooperation.

The threat is particularly worrying as in 2016, according to ITU, nearly one per cent of all emails sent were essentially malicious attacks, the highest rate in recent years.

Last month, a cyberattack crippled tens of thousands of machines around the world. It is unclear who was behind the attack.



Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, ITU. Photo: ITU/R.Farrell

“While the impact generated by cyberattacks, such as those carried out as recently as 27 June 2017, may not be eliminated completely, [prevention and mitigation measures](#) to reduce the risks posed by cyber-related threats can

and should always be put in place,” said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao.

The findings show that there is “space for further improvement in cooperation” at all levels, according to the report, which advocates for encouraging governments to consider national policies that take into account cybersecurity and encourage private citizens to make smart decisions online.