



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement

Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, at the meeting of Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems 21-25 September 2020, Geneva

General Exchange of Views – 21 September 2020

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your re-appointment as the Chair of this Group of Governmental Experts and assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation.

We align ourselves with the position expressed in the working paper submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to the Chair of the GGE.

LAWS are rightly being described as the next revolution in military affairs and there have been mounting expressions of concerns about how these weapons would change warfare. Pakistan also views the introduction of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) with great concern due to their legal, ethical and humanitarian dimensions as well as their serious impact on international and regional peace, security and stability.

Notwithstanding the incremental progress achieved in the GGE so far, the pace of technological advances in LAWS continues to outpace the substance of deliberations. This remains an area of concern for our delegation and many others.

This year, in keeping with the agreed mandate of the GGE, we hope that focussed work will be conducted to develop "possible options for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging

technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, including recommendations in relation to the development of aspects of the normative and operational framework on LAWS”.

Mr. Chairman,

The Guiding Principles that have been developed so far to facilitate the work of the GGE constitute an important step in crystallizing convergences to achieve consensual outcome of the work of the GGE. The guiding principles, as well as the debate around them is still evolving as the High Contracting Parties agreed that they may be further developed, elaborated, and refined.

While an important step, we are of the view that being only one component of the larger canvas of considerations governing the recommendations of the GGE, these principles alone should not be assimilated to a separate framework, intended for implementation itself or for operationalization at the national level.

Further development and elaboration of these principles, in our view, could continue to contribute to our efforts as we work towards development of concrete policy recommendations by the GGE, including elements of a legally binding instrument stipulating appropriate prohibitions and regulations for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of LAWS.

Mr. Chairman,

The following five key areas, in our view, should guide further work at the GGE over the course of our two year mandate:

First, LAWS are a unique and novel class of weapons that have given rise to multi-faceted concerns. These need to be addressed multilaterally. National regulations and responses such as national weapons reviews etc. are useful but not sufficient. International regulations are needed.

Second, human control and responsibility on the use of weapons with autonomous functions has been established as essential. We need now to focus on ascertaining the scope and extent of human control that would satisfy all concerns related to the humanitarian, security and ethical dimensions of LAWS.

Third, while it has been established that weapons with autonomous functions must comply with International Law including International Humanitarian Law, we now need to determine whether autonomous machines

are capable of being programmed to ensure such compliance. And if yes, what are the means and measures necessary for doing so.

Fourth, we need to identify the key attributes that would characterize a given weapon system as LAWS. This should be a technical and policy-neutral process, and not a political issue. Characterization of LAWS should be pursued as a matter of priority, without prejudice to the regulatory response, to arrive at a simple working definition of LAWS.

Fifth, the issue of LAWS does not only have legal, ethical and technical dimensions, but also carries serious implications for regional and global security. This aspect needs to be adequately addressed in our discussions over the course of the GGE. Rapid advances in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) need to be appropriately regulated in all its dimensions with respect to LAWS. They should not outpace the evolution of regulations governing them.

Mr. Chairman,

A large majority of States, including my own, have expressed the strong desire to pursue a legally binding instrument in the form of a new Protocol to the CCW stipulating appropriate prohibitions and regulations on LAWS. This has clearly emerged as the strongest and most favoured option. We note that other opinions have also been voiced, such as the call for exploring the possibility of non-legally binding declaration, and Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs). In our view, these options should not supplant a legally-binding instrument on LAWS.

We would continue to engage constructively with other delegations to explore and agree on recommendations to deal with LAWS, including on elements of a legally binding instrument stipulating appropriate prohibitions and regulations, as also called for by NAM.

We look forward to a policy-level and result-oriented discussions in the GGE. The consequences of inaction or delaying tactics, especially on international peace and security, are too grave to be ignored. As my delegation has noted previously as well, the process launched within the CCW can only be sustained if it is result-oriented and is seen to be responding to the concerns of all States.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman