



## Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

### Statement

#### CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, 21-25 September 2020

**Agenda item 5(b): Characterization of the systems under consideration in order to promote a common understanding on concepts and characteristics relevant to the objectives and purposes of the Convention (22 Sep 2020)**

Mr. Chairman,

The thematic focus of this afternoon's session "characterisation" has benefited from the discussions this GGE has had previously, particularly so in bringing precision to the direction we must take on this issue. It has also crystallized that characterization is not a standalone debate but is intrinsically tied to the discussions on IHL, human control and the security dimension.

Our previous discussions have highlighted the need for identifying the key attributes that would characterise a given weapon system as LAWS. My delegation continues to believe that this should be a technical and policy-neutral process, and not a political issue. Characterisation of LAWS should be pursued as a matter of priority without prejudice to the regulatory response.

Mr. Chairman,

We have also delved on the concept of autonomy being a spectrum and its implications for characterization. For my delegation, especially based on our discussions earlier today, the concept of levels of autonomy is directly related to the concept of what that autonomy entails for the weapons system.

In this regard, this level of autonomy is a corollary of the capabilities of the weapons system – which is the most important factor in characterising a

weapon system as LAWS. As I outlined in detail earlier today, weapons that can autonomously select or engage a target, choose or change their geographical, temporal, or operational scope, also known as a weapon's critical functions, without the direct involvement, control or supervision of a human, should be characterised as LAWS.

The idea is to capture all weapons systems that have the *capability* to act autonomously, regardless of whether their users have the *intention* to employ them in an autonomous mode. Therefore, autonomous weapons systems with manual over-ride or self destruct and self-deactivate functions should not escape their characterisation as LAWS.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is of the view that our discussions previously in the GGE and on the connected elements have contributed to sufficiently demystify and simplify this aspect of the debate. We should be able to reach such a simple, common working understanding of LAWS, without necessarily agreeing on a comprehensive and all encompassing legal-technical definition that might be incorporated in a legal instrument in the future.

In our view, the discourse on characterisation should no longer remain an avenue for complicating the debate, nor for procrastinating while the relevant technologies continue to be weaponised. We should indeed prioritise moving ahead with this process and shift gears now.

Our aim by the end of the GGE should squarely remain development of concrete policy recommendations leading to development of a legal normative framework on LAWS.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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