

Informal CCW Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS)
(Geneva, 13-17 April 2015)

Statement by PAKISTAN Delegation during the Session on “Way Ahead”, 17Apr 2015
Delivered by Usman Jadoon, First Secretary

Mr. Chairman,

We congratulate you on organizing and chairing a very successful meeting comprising an informative and substantive exchange of views. We broadly agree with the succinct summary read out by you regarding the way forward.

We participated actively in the week-long discussions and found them very beneficial and highly stimulating. We remain convinced that the introduction of LAWS would be illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security with grave consequences. Therefore, their further development and use must be pre-emptively banned through a dedicated Protocol of the CCW. Pending the negotiations and conclusions of a legally binding Protocol, the states currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and use.

While posing a number of technical, ethical, moral and legal challenges, including compliance with the International Humanitarian Law and the International Human Rights Law, the overarching concern with respect to LAWS remains their impact on international and regional peace and security as well as their negative effect on the general progress towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

We recognize that a wide variety of views exist among CCW states parties on the various aspects of LAWS. Some out-rightly deny the existence and development of fully autonomous weapon systems; others feel that a discussion on prohibition or regulation would be premature while the technology is still evolving; a few even believe that rather than banning or regulating this emerging technology, the CCW process might actually end up legitimizing such abhorrent weapons.

One clear conclusion that could be drawn is that further discussions leading the development of a common understanding would be highly beneficial for effectively dealing with this topic. The suggestion to limit the evaluation of the development and employment of LAWS to a purely national exercise including national reviews under Article-36, while appealing and convenient for the developers of such technologies, is not convincing or satisfactory for us and the large majority present here.

Therefore, as a practical step forward, without prejudice to our preference for a comprehensive and pre-emptive ban on LAWS, we find merit in the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) by the CCW Meeting of States Parties this year (2015), with a mandate to formally consider this issue and present a report to the CCW Review Conference next year (2016).

I thank you, Mr. Chairman