

**First Session of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on
Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, 9-13 April 2018**

**General Exchange of Views – 9 April 2018
(Statement by Ambassador Farukh Amil
Permanent Representative of PAKISTAN)**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your re-appointment as the Chairman of this Group of Governmental Experts and assuring you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. We thank you for the informal consultations undertaken by you in preparation for this meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Pakistan welcomes the outcome of the GGE last year. 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". We look forward to the development of concrete policy recommendations by the GGE including elements of a legally binding instrument stipulating prohibitions and regulations on LAWS.

Mr. Chairman,

LAWS are rightly being described as the next revolution in military affairs. These weapons would fundamentally change the nature of war. The absence of human intervention will make wars more inhumane. Regardless of the level of sophistication and programming, machines cannot replace humans in making the vital decision of taking another human's life.

LAWS cannot be programmed to comply with the rules of International Humanitarian Law. Their introduction will lower the threshold of going to war; consequently, the resort to use of force will become a more frequent phenomenon. LAWS could also be used in anonymous and clandestine operations as well as for targeted killing including in the territory of other states.

LAWS would, therefore, undermine international peace and security. Their introduction would affect progress on disarmament and non-proliferation. Faced with the prospect of being overwhelmed by LAWS, states possessing WMD capabilities would be reluctant to give them up, while others would feel encouraged to acquire them.

The states that are currently developing and using LAWS cannot afford to be complacent that such capabilities will not proliferate over time. Monopolies over such technologies do not last forever. Since the developing countries are not going to carry the burden of non-proliferation, an unchecked autonomous weapons' arms race could ensue. Besides, LAWS could also proliferate to non-state actors with unimaginable consequences.

Like any other complex machine, LAWS can never be fully predictable or reliable and could fail for a wide variety of reasons. There will always be a level of uncertainty about the way an autonomous weapon system will interact with the external environment.

We view the introduction of LAWS as unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security. Their further development and use must ideally be pre-emptively banned through a dedicated Protocol of the CCW. Pending the negotiation and conclusion of a legally binding Protocol, the states currently developing such weapons should place a moratorium on their production.

Mr. Chairman,

We are heartened to note that a general sense is developing among the High Contracting Parties that weapons with autonomous functions must remain under the direct control and supervision of humans at all times, and must comply with international law including International Humanitarian Law. Although the concepts of "meaningful human control" and "appropriate human judgement" have gained some currency and traction in the context of LAWS, we are of the view that these concepts only provide an approach to discussing the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies. They do not provide a solution to the technical, legal, moral and regulatory questions posed by LAWS.

Pakistan is studying the working papers submitted by various States Parties for this meeting. NAM has also contributed a paper, subscribed to by Pakistan. These Working Papers provide some concrete suggestions that merit careful consideration.

We are of the view that a Political Declaration or non-legally binding Code of Conduct comprising voluntary measures can only be an interim step towards a legally binding instrument. Similarly, the "weapon review" required under Article-36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions is not sufficient to deal with the development of LAWS. These national reviews, regardless of their transparency, cannot substitute the need to evolve international prohibitions and regulations on LAWS.

The issue of LAWS does not only have legal, ethical and technical dimensions, but also carries serious implications for regional and global peace and security including effects on the thresholds for armed conflicts. This serious security dimension needs to be adequately addressed in the GGE.

Mr. Chairman,

We should try to avoid further technical discussions that have been undertaken exhaustively during the previous meetings and now sharpen our focus on developing policy recommendations. My delegation will engage actively and constructively in that endeavour.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.