

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Before proceeding with our intervention, the University Pablo de Olavide, from Seville, Spain, would like to thank the High Contracting Parties in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons for the opportunity offered to our academic institution to actively participate in such relevant Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (GGE on LAWS).

Furthermore, we would like to specially recognize the management and leadership of the President. Such diligent management so can only be founded on a real, firm and responsible compromise with the human being and his dignity.

Congratulations and thank you, Mr. President.

And now I will try to be as concise as possible.

We take as reference the semi-circular scheme proposed by the Presidency. This scheme organizes the development of Autonomous Weapon Systems into four phases, from their design to their effective implementation. We present our humble proposal considering such scheme. This proposal is characterized by its multi and inter-disciplinary character and its vocation for integration.

The phases of the semi-circular scheme are:

First: (R & D), Research & Development

Second: Testing and Evaluation, (T & E)
Verification and Validation, (V & V)
Reviews (R)

Third: Deployment, Command & Control (D, C & C)

And Fourth: Use & Abort (U & A)

- We believe that the International Law not only projects over phases 3 and 4, but also over phases 1 and 2. We should notice that the terms employed by the Art. 36 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions are referred to “study and develop” and “acquire and adopt”.

To study and develop a new autonomous weapon system refers, thus, directly to phases 1 and 2.

Even if it is the private sector who carries out those research works, it would be subjected to the internal law of the States.

As a consequence, the juridical legitimacy of an eventual intra-state regulation on the research and development of autonomous systems that could be used as weapons stems from the international law. And thus, it is the responsibility of the States here present to preserve the compliance to the international rules within their borders.

- On the other hand, we would like to emphasize the idea that has been put forth in this room along the week and in previous sessions: **the double use of such systems.**

As it is well known, autonomous systems are not a monopoly of the weaponry industry. These systems can have multiple implementations and applications, most of them of civilian nature, that can improve the quality of life of humans. Any advance on the autonomy of systems can, therefore, derive in machines that assist us, take care of us, medicate us, survey us, protect us, ... and harm us, of course.

This consubstantial and intrinsic double nature of the autonomous systems implies that the consideration about their specific use as combat means should be approached not only from an inter-disciplinary view, but also from a transversal, integrated and integral one.

Even though the objectives and purpose of the Convention are limited to a concrete context (the ways and means for combat, and the guarantee of the compliance with the IHL), we cannot avoid the reality, neither lose a global and integrating view.

In this sense, we would like to bring again the idea on which Prof. Pascale Fung insisted yesterday: it is essential to provide an explicit ethical training to the robotic and artificial intelligence engineers since their first years of academic formation because, as also Prof. Lambert mentioned, these are issues that affect human dignity.

In this regard, our University is aware of the problem and assumes its responsibility.

And the High Contracting Parties have the most efficient tool (the law) to promote, in their respective States, an academic training founded on the fundamental values of respect and intangibility of the human dignity as a *prae* of any actuation.

- Finally, and connecting the previous considerations with the necessity of reaching an agreement on ethical norms that guide any activity that affects the LAWS, we would like to draw attention to the requirement that the States involve scientists and robotic engineers in a more proactive way, and not only in an advising role.

As already Prof. Tony Gillespie clarified yesterday, there is no lack of conscience or sense of responsibility among scientist. Neither, in some occasions, sense of guilt.

There are currently multiple ethical codes that regulate the research activity in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence.

Some of them come from States themselves (yesterday they were mentioned by China and United Kingdom, but not only by them), others from professional associations. For instance, the *Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems*, being developed by the Institute of Electric and Electronic Engineers (IEEE).

The President already referred to this and other initiatives in the Food for Thought material that he facilitated to the High Contracting Parties for the preparation of the Group Meeting in 2017, as a footnote.

We warn the States about the risks that the polarization on ethical rules and systems can pose, and we invite them to focus on the only source of ethical production that encompasses all moral and cultural visions, through the element that unites all of them: the Human Rights.

We consider that the voices of the engineers must be heard with special interest, and we should give them the attention and authority they deserve. At the end of the day, the products from their ingenuity provides us our well-being and quality of life. They are the mothers and fathers of the autonomy that worries us. And they have plenty to say and give.

We would like to finish our intervention with a purely academic reminder that the High Contracting Parties may use as a supporting point when they go through tough moments in the commendable path that this Group of Experts has begun.

We refer to one of the Basic Principles of International Law, compiled in the Art. 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, subscribed by the States, and ratified and developed by the International Community twenty-five years since their first formulation, in Resolution 2625 (XXV) of the General Assembly: **States shall fulfill in Good Faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with The UN Charter and Conventional and Customary International Law.**

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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