



Misión Permanente de la República de Cuba ante la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra y otros Organismos internacionales con sede en Suiza.

First session of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

STATEMENT

H.E. MR. PEDRO LUIS PEDROSO CUESTA.

AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BASED IN SWITZERLAND

Geneva, November 13, 2017.

Mr. Chairman:

First of all, I would like to welcome you and wish you success in carrying out your duties as Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts. Cuba trusts that with your knowledge, experience and diplomatic skills you will be able to guide our work effectively towards the achievement of a successful outcome.

I also wish to support the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We also highlight the fact that the Chair of the Group is held by a Member State of the Movement, which shows the interest of the NAM in this process and the necessary geographical distribution as a principle in our work, which allows the diversity of visions.

I can assure you that Cuba will participate constructively in the work of the Group and will work for the continuation of the process towards the future.

Mr. Chairman:

At the beginning of our work, I would like to reaffirm that for Cuba, the adoption of practical actions that allow us to move forward, as quickly as possible, towards a legally binding instrument that prohibits lethal, fully autonomous weapons is fundamental. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the appropriate forum to negotiate and adopt that instrument of prohibition.

We consider that these weapons are incompatible with the International Humanitarian Law, because their use could not guarantee compliance, among others, with the principles of Distinction and Proportionality. Nor could there be an effective assessment of the State's responsibility for internationally wrongful acts, nor of accountability for violations of the International Law.

Human control must be maintained in the most important decisions of the war, including those related to the selection and attacks of the objectives. Machines can not replace human beings in qualitative judgments, which are of key importance in armed conflicts.

Therefore, a precautionary approach based on the precautionary principle is required to guarantee the prohibition of autonomous weapons before they begin to be produced on a mass scale and deployed.

It is also worrisome the increasing use, inconsistently with the principles of International Law and International Humanitarian Law, of semi-autonomous military technologies, such as unmanned aerial attack vehicles or drones,

which cause a very high number of civilian casualties. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is also the appropriate forum to adopt a legally binding instrument regulating the use of these weapons.

Mr. Chairman:

Cuba supported the creation of the Open-ended Group of Governmental Experts by the Fifth Review Conference of the CCAC, taking into account the recommendation emanating from the Meeting of Experts on Autonomous Weapons held in April 2016.

We hope that the Group of Experts will continue its work in 2018, with the aim of identifying and clarifying common understandings, definitions and concepts that allow, in an accelerated way, to initiate the necessary negotiations of an international, legally binding instrument for the prohibition of autonomous weapons and for the regulation of semi-autonomous weapons, as is the case with military attack drones.

We hope that in the shortest possible time the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will be able to adopt a new Additional Protocol on lethal autonomous and semi-autonomous weapons.

Thank you very much.