

Statement by Mr. Husham Ahmed, Director (Arms Control and Disarmament), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thematic Debate on Other Disarmament Measures and International Security
(30 October 2018)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement under this cluster.

The relentless pace of emerging weapons technologies, driven by scientific innovations, carries serious implications. The rapid development of new weapon systems in the conventional domain poses a threat to peace, security and stability at the regional and global levels. Governing and regulating the development and use of such weapons under International Law is however proving to be a major challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

The development of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) has emerged as a major cause concern for the international community. Any weapon system that delegates life and death decisions to machines, is by nature unethical, and cannot fully comply with international law including International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.

LAWS gravely threaten international and regional peace and security as they lower the threshold of war. They would also negatively affect progress on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Their likely proliferation to non-state actors and terrorists adds another dangerous dimension to their existence.

Developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence need to be appropriately tackled and regulated. They should not outpace the evolution of regulations governing them.

Pakistan strongly feels that an international legally binding framework should be evolved to regulate different aspects of LAWS. States currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and meaningfully engage with the international community in addressing their concerns.

Pakistan presided over the Fifth CCW Review Conference held in Geneva in December 2016, which provided a useful opportunity to take stock of the

Convention and resulted in a forward looking outcome document. Pakistan supported the establishment of an open-ended GGE related to emerging technologies in the area of LAWS in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention and looks forward to the development of concrete policy options by the GGE. At the same time, we remain open to addressing this issue in other relevant multilateral fora including the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, the trans-border unauthorised use of armed drones outside of international armed conflict, especially against civilians, constitutes a violation of International Law, the UN Charter, International Humanitarian Law as well as International Human Rights Laws. Their use also contravenes State sovereignty and the UN Charter restrictions on the legitimate use of force for self-defence purpose only. The UN Human Rights Council, jurists and human rights groups have all opposed armed drones' targeting of civilians through 'signature strikes' and termed their use as tantamount to extrajudicial killings.

Moreover, the threat of non-state actors and terrorists acquiring armed drones cannot be ruled out. All of these factors necessitate the development of appropriate international regulations on the employment of armed drones.

Mr. Chairman,

Cyber warfare poses serious challenges to international peace and security. We are witnessing how misuse and un-regulated use of ICT could have serious implications for international peace and security in the event of a cyber attack launched on critical infrastructure. The hostile use of cyber technologies is fast approaching the stage where it can be characterized as weapon of mass destruction, and not just disruption.

As a member, Pakistan remained positively and constructively engaged in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts mandated by resolution 68/243 and welcomed the 2015 report of this GGE. We were disappointed that the last GGE could not agree on a consensus report. Perhaps it is time to move the issue to a universal multilateral setting, including at the Conference on Disarmament, to develop an international consensus on addressing the security and arms control related dimensions of this vital issue.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.