

**Statement by Mr. Khalil Hashmi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan
at the First Committee Thematic Debate on
Other disarmament measures and international security
(30 October 2015)**

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In many ways, technology is re-shaping societies and states. Its scale, pace and impact is unprecedented in human history. Even as technological innovations offer immense opportunities for peace and development, they are also accompanied by several challenges including in the area of arms control, disarmament as well as peace and security at national, regional, sub-regional and international levels.

The dual nature of new and emerging technologies such as ICT, Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS), armed drones and artificial intelligence(AI) present unique challenges in terms of definitions, scope, application and interpretation of existing international law. Dangers posed by the development, production and use of these technologies are real and urgent since they reduce or eliminate the risk of human casualties for the user states and, therefore, increase the propensity for their use. The net result is lowering of the threshold for resort to armed conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

The risks associated with the malicious use of ICTs are growing with far-reaching implications for international peace and security. Cyber space has emerged as the new domain of warfare along with traditional arenas of land, sea, air, as well as outer space. The ability to act anonymously or in secret, without traditional geographical limitations, at a very low risk to human life, coupled with the ability to mass produce cyber weapons quickly and cheaply, makes cyber weapons extremely attractive and dangerous.

Information and communications technologies have not only been used for indiscriminate surveillance in violation of the international legal regime, including the right to privacy, freedom of expression and information, but also as a means of waging cyber-attacks. Some classified cyber weapons disguised as computer viruses and software have also been developed and used to penetrate other states' networks.

Misuse and un-regulated use of ICTs could lead to serious implications for international peace and security in the event of a cyber attack launched on critical infrastructure such as electricity grids, disruption of satellites, weather forecasting

and even the security infrastructure of states. In this context, the hostile use of cyber technologies can indeed be characterized as a new weapon of mass destruction and disruption.

We are pleased to have engaged positively with international efforts to address challenges arising from the misuse of ICTs including in the recent UN Group of Governmental Experts. The GGE has made an important contribution in working towards development of common understanding on this important subject.

As a new GGE is formed next year, we look forward to continuing discussions on applicability of international law in cyber space, development of norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of states, confidence-building measures, and international assistance and cooperation. We also acknowledge the importance of the draft International Code of Conduct for Information Security.

Given the importance and implications of ICTs for Member States, it is essential to take into account the representation and views of different regions in the work of the new GGE. We also remain open to the possibility of the CD considering this issue in the form of negotiating an international instrument that regulates the use of cyber weapons from an arms control perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

The development of new types of weapons, such as Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) remains an area of concern for the international community. These weapons are rightly being described as the next revolution in military affairs, similar to the introduction of gun-powder and nuclear weapons.

LAWS by their very nature are unethical – taking the human out of the loop and delegating power to machines, which inherently lack any compassion, feelings and intuition, to make life and death decisions. LAWS would not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants; they lack morality, mortality and judgement. The use of LAWS will make war even more inhumane.

The introduction of LAWS 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. LAWS would, therefore, further undermine international peace and security.

Pakistan shares the widely held view that further development and use of these weapon systems must be pre-emptively banned, and the states currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and use.

Mr. Chairman,

While the international community is understandably focused on the impact of weapons of mass destruction on international security, especially nuclear weapons, the rapid development of new weapons technologies in the conventional weapons domain, also pose serious threats to international peace and security. This reality is underscored by the increasing and indiscriminate use of new weapons such as armed drones.

The use of armed drones, especially against civilians, contravenes State sovereignty and the UN Charter restrictions on legitimate use of force for self-defense, in the absence of imminent danger and without express permission from States in whose territory the armed drones are used. The established principles of distinction, proportionality, transparency and accountability are also violated.

The UN Human Rights Council, jurists and human rights groups have all opposed armed drones targeting civilians through 'signature strikes' and termed their use as tantamount to extrajudicial killings since no due process of law is followed.

Moreover, the proliferation of drone technology over time would make their use more dangerous and widespread. Even more challenging would be the task of preventing and deterring non-state actors and terrorists from developing, deploying and using drones against people or even States. When such technology spreads, their use could lead to miscalculations and even eruption of inter-State conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence also poses distinct challenges as their development is outpacing regulations that need to govern their production and use. Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications, if left unregulated, could pose potentially significant risks for international peace and security.

If history is any guide, the development of AI as a weapon would inevitably lead to an arms race in this field as well as increased proliferation risks. AI based weapons may not require costly or hard-to-obtain raw materials including their availability on the internet. It is therefore both essential and urgent to evolve agreed rules and regulations to govern the development, production and use of this new and emerging technology. The United Nations remains an indispensable platform for this purpose.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.