**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

**Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi at the Plenary Meeting of the
Conference on Disarmament
Agenda Item 6: AI in the military domain and LAWS
03 August 2023**

Mr. President,

On behalf of Pakistan delegation, I congratulate you on assuming the Presidency and thank you for convening the plenary meeting today on an important subject.

We are also grateful for the useful presentations today by UNIDIR and UNODA.

Mr. President,

The global discourse over Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a matter of science fiction. The future of AI and what it portends is a function of here and now.

The recent demonstration of AI's generative capabilities, its wide public access and the pace of machine learning has surprised many of us tasked to mitigate risks to human life and dignity.

At the same time, AI's inevitable march from algorithms to armaments is gathering pace without any guardrails on its design, development and deployment.

We are standing at the cusp of a new arms race, where algorithms would be in the driving seat. As AI heads to the battlefield, it is reasonable to ask whether and to what extent humans would continue to control it and hold the 'off switch'.

The UN Secretary General, in his New Agenda for Peace proposals, has noted, and I *quote*, "the increasing ubiquity of AI, combined with its rapid scalability, lack of transparency and pace of innovation, poses potential risks to international peace and security and presents governance challenges". *Unquote*

Many states are following these developments closely and have been raising a number of concerns including the transformative and potentially destabilizing impacts the AI could have on peace, security and stability.

There are increasing number of regional initiatives and multilateral efforts underway to address concerns surrounding the military capabilities of AI. Civil society has also been taking keen interest and actively participating in this discourse.

We have also heard calls for establishing a new UN body to govern the development of AI.

The UN Security Council also held its first meeting on this subject last month under the UK Presidency.

Mr. President,

In this backdrop, let us see how the disarmament machinery as a whole has responded to wide ranging concerns on military applications of AI and LAWS.

For almost a decade, States have been highlighting the legal, ethical, humanitarian and security dimensions of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). There are several concrete proposals on the table, including the one submitted by Pakistan on an "International Legal Instrument on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)".

However, the CCW deliberations have primarily centered around the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in the development, deployment and use of LAWS. The discussions on security and stability aspects of these weapon systems have been relatively incidental.

The CCW discussions aim to address LAWS. They neither deal with the broader rubric of development of AI in all its military applications including their integration in existing domains nor their security and stability impacts at the global and regional levels.

At the First Committee, there was a Joint Statement for the first time on this subject last year.

Within this Conference, Member States have been expressing views on security and stability aspects, which have been part of our records including in subsidiary body 5 report adopted last year.

Mr. President,

We believe that discussions on LAWS should continue in the GGEs of the CCW with an aim to develop international rules through a new Protocol spelling out prohibitions and regulations.

Simultaneously, other disarmament bodies should play a complimentary role to address the broader issue of AI in military applications in a way that builds positive synergies, while avoiding duplication. The scale of challenges resulting from the use of AI for military purposes including in weapon systems necessitates a multifaceted and a holistic multilateral response.

Mr. President,

With this in mind, my delegation has taken the initiative to submit a Working Paper to this Conference titled "**Addressing the Security and Stability Implications of Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Autonomy in Weapon Systems**".

The Working Paper has been circulated by the Secretariat and will be published as an official document of this Conference i.e. CD/2334.

Let me take this opportunity to present its salience and some of its main contents.

Pakistan's working paper spells out the profound security and stability challenges posed by the unregulated development and deployment of AI for military purposes and autonomous weapon systems.

Our paper also highlights the absence of any normative guardrails which creates and may escalate nuclear risks, lead to miscalculations, and entail catastrophic consequences.

The paper also speaks to the danger of AI integration with nuclear force posture and employment policies that can undermine traditional concepts of deterrence escalation and risk reduction, endangering regional and global security.

Additionally, our paper also explains how the use of AI-generated data and information may foster a false sense of confidence, prompting states to consider destabilizing pre-emptive counterforce strikes or target second strike capabilities. Disinformation generated through using AI could also manipulate critical decision-making processes especially during crises.

The working paper notes that a few states have recognized these risks and undertaken a political commitment to maintain human control and involvement in all actions relating to nuclear weapons employment. This is, indeed, a welcome step.

However, the magnitude of concerns and possible risks, which warrant human control and oversight, are not just limited to nuclear weapons.

Threats to peace, security and stability at the regional and global levels resulting from the use of unregulated AI in critical military decision making processes and conventional weapon systems are comparable to any category of WMDs.

Our working paper lists several of such risks to peace, security and stability.

These include, inter alia:

- Lowering threshold for the use of force and armed conflict,

- Increasing likelihood of miscalculation and introducing rapid non-linear pathways to escalation,

- Losing control over the magnitude, area and duration of conflicts,

- Reduction in time available for decision-making with the warfare taking place at machine speeds,

- Challenges for reliability, predictability, and explainability in complex and dynamic real-life situations,

- Increased propensity towards asymmetrical warfare,

- Arms race and proliferation including to non-state actors.

These risks exist everywhere, but they are particularly acute in regions with high levels of tensions and which have a history of accidental launch incidents by one state, representing a classic case of an unmitigated disaster.

Mr. President,

Our working paper argues that the CD is well suited to commence deliberations and negotiations on the arms control and restraints related measures pertaining to military AI capabilities.

This subject has direct relevance to several agenda items of this body.

The AI for military purposes and autonomous weapon systems are a cross-cutting theme to the areas of nuclear disarmament, prevention of war, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and new types of weapons of mass destruction.

For this purpose, our working paper outlines three steps for consideration by CD Member States:

(a)   Continued deliberations on the implications of regional and global security as well as stability resulting from the development, deployment, integration and use of AI for military purposes and autonomous weapon systems under existing agenda item 5;

(b)   Introduction of new agenda item in the future sessions of the CD on this subject;

(c)   And, subsequently, establishment of a subsidiary body to advance substantive work on this subject.

Mr. President,

This body can no longer choose to ignore the security and stability impacts of military AI and autonomy in weapons. These matters fall directly into the remit of this Conference.

Failure to address the serious risks to peace and security would not only entail dire humanitarian consequences, but also oblige states faced with existing asymmetries to defend themselves with the capabilities at their disposal. An arms race is all but certain to take place in this new domain.

Conversely, commencing deliberations in the CD on the security and stability aspects of the development, deployment, integration and use of AI for military purposes will have a positive synergetic effect on the ongoing discussions in the CCW and elsewhere.

Such discussions will also be in tune with the calls made by several leaders including the UN Secretary General, international organizations and civil society to give serious attention to these topical subjects.

These deliberations may also help unlock the decades long impasse in the CD; contribute to revitalization of the work of the CD; and send a clear signal to the international community that the CD is responsive to the new and emerging risks.

We hope our working paper will help stimulate engaging discussions on this subject and we remain open to receiving feedback and inputs.

I thank you.

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