Joint Statement on Organizing the Work of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

Mr. Chair,

I have the pleasure of taking floor on behalf of following countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Uruguay, Venezuela, and my own country, Pakistan.

The Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the CCW in 2023 agreed on the following mandate for the new Group of Governmental Experts (GGE):

“In the context of the objectives and purpose of the Convention, the Group is to further consider and formulate, by consensus, a set of elements of an instrument, without prejudging its nature, and other possible measures to address emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems, taking into account the example of existing Protocols within the Convention, proposals presented by High Contracting Parties and other options related to the normative and operational framework on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems, building upon the recommendations and conclusions of the Group, and bringing in expertise on legal, military, and technological aspects”

The current mandate of the GGE is the most ambitious one till date since GGE was first established back in 2016. The GGE is tasked to work under this ambitious mandate for a period of three years and preferably finish its work by the end of 2025.

The work of the GGE will be taking place in the background of increasing support for negotiating a legally-binding instrument. In his policy brief on ‘New Agenda for Peace’, the UN Secretary General has also urged states to conclude a legally binding instrument on LAWS.

The GGE will not be starting its work from scratch. As we commence this result-oriented and outcome driven process, our mandate demands that we organize our work in a manner that takes into account the following in a comprehensive and a holistic manner:

- Previous work done and building upon the recommendations and conclusions of the Group,
- Example of existing Protocols,
- Proposals presented by the High Contracting Parties, and,
- Other options related to normative and operational framework.
Mr. Chair,

It has been a long-held position of a large number of countries (including interalia, NAM members) that the issue of LAWS must be addressed comprehensively in all aspects. The humanitarian, legal, ethical and security dimensions must always remain integrated in a meaningful manner in the work of the GGE. The challenges highlighted by various delegations and the proposals put forward by them address various dimensions. Therefore, it is essential that we organize the work of our GGE in a way, which enables us to capture these vital ideas in an integrated manner.

Mr. Chair,

In this regard, we believe that structuring our work around the proposed topics, as contained in our indicative timetable, is a narrow interpretation of our mandate and may risk limiting the scope of our work in the GGE.

In view of the above, we would like to propose that our work in the GGE may be organized as per the following topics with a clear objective of formulating a set of elements of an instrument without prejudging our substantive viewpoints on each of those topics:

- Characterizations and definitions,
- Application of International Law, including in particular International Humanitarian Law,
- Human Machine Interaction/Meaningful human control and Ethical Considerations,
- Security Considerations and Other Risks,
- Prohibitions and Regulations,
- Responsibility and Accountability, and
- Risk Mitigation/Confidence Building Measures and Other Measures.

Thank you.

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