Arab Republic of Egypt
Views on opportunities and challenges
of application of artificial intelligence in the military domain
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Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/239, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt would like to share its views on the opportunities and challenges posed to international peace and security by the application of artificial intelligence in the military domain, as follows:

- This resolution represents an important step to foster multilateralism on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the military domain and towards putting it higher on the political agenda. This comes in the wake of the United Nations Secretary-General's call to develop norms, rules and principles around the design, development and use of military application of AI with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

- With the understanding that the aforementioned resolution, pursuant to which these views are presented, aims to place specific focus on areas other than lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). It is key to reiterate Egypt's steadfast position that any meaningful discussion on the subject matter can never overlook the priority of addressing all ethical, legal and security dimensions surrounding LAWS, which represent the most pressing threat to the maintenance of international peace and security as far as the military applications of AI are concerned.

- Agreeing on a legally binding prohibition of LAWS that function without human control or oversight and that can't be used in compliance with international humanitarian law, as previously

- suggested by the United Nations Secretary General is the most effective and realistic course of action. Pursuing a two-tiered approach of prohibition and restriction/regulation, comprising the prohibition of these weapon systems that function without human control, while regulating other systems is essential to establish the necessary universal legal architecture that provides an enabling environment to maximize the benefits from the new opportunities offered by AI military applications while tackling the relevant challenges in a realistic, effective and timely manner.

- The international policy landscape surrounding AI in the military domain is far from being unified. Egypt follows closely the multiple international initiatives thereon, which demonstrate the increasing awareness of the associated risks. Nevertheless, Deliberations during these initiatives have revealed diversions in views, threat perceptions and priorities, and we accordingly have to caution against the peril of creating a fragmented policy framework or competing processes, as was the case with other domains of new and emerging technologies.

- There is a clear need for streamlining these initiatives and to bring them under the UN umbrella to ensure their inclusivity and effectiveness. The United Nations and its disarmament machinery represent the only effective and inclusive platform to develop the necessary international rules and normative framework, especially that technological developments continue to starkly outpace the necessary regulation at the international level.

- Hence, it is imperative to develop a universal, independent, single tracked and trusted platform under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the future governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the military domain. The envisaged UN led process shall be tailored to avoid certain emerging counterproductive dichotomies. For example, the one between the legitimate efforts to ensure legal compliance and ethics versus the tendency to further military interests without due regard to humanitarian implications,

- It shall be highlighted as well, that while appreciating the discussions conducted within the group of governmental experts on Lethal autonomous weapons under the umbrella of 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 (CCW), this platform can't serve as a substitute to the envisaged UN process on the AI applications in military domain, given that the GGE is not universal in nature, nor does it have the mandate to tackle a topic of such versatility and diversity. It is also regrettable that progress within the GGE remains quite minimal and no tangible results therein have been reached yet.

- In conjunction with the opportunities offered by AI technologies, they introduce a host of risks inherent in the characteristics of such technologies, which can function unpredictably and unexplainably. These risks include, including disinformation, inadvertent escalation, cyber risks as well as misuse and proliferation to non-state actors. The risks can be novel or can make existing ones more complex

- It is widely acknowledged that there is broad array of possible military applications of AI. However, meaningful efforts to elaborate on their future governance shall establish the right order of priorities in terms of their inherent risk and their impact on peace and security. This aims to ensure focused and structured discussions, while avoiding undue distraction. With that said, Egypt holds a very strong view that the emphasis shall be placed, aside from the issue of LAWS, on other autonomous or semi-autonomous systems capabilities that enable the use of force and/or lower the threshold for the use of force, and accordingly may lead to additional arms race dynamics spanning both conventional and non-conventional weapons. The potential for increased autonomy of nuclear weapons and advanced conventional weaponry such as hypersonic missiles would create unknown risks and transform the future of conflict in unpredictable ways .

- Emphasis shall be also placed on command and control and target selection activities, rather than logistics planning and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) given their less disruptive impacts. Similarly, more focus is to be put on offensive rather than defensive capabilities.

- The envisaged deliberations within the desired UN led process shall aim first at reaching a common understanding on the main elements underpinning the development, deployment and use of AI in the military domain. These elements include, inter alia:

    1- Full compliance with the applicable international law, including the cardinal principles of the International Humanitarian Law such as necessity, proportionality, and distinction, as well as other ethical considerations, throughout the life cycle and stages of AI applications in the military domain

    2- The centrality of preserving the human element throughout the whole lifecycle of AI military applications, including human judgement, intervention, oversight and control as the key enablers to maintain accountability. it is necessary to ensure that all software, algorithms, and designs involving the utilization of AI applications in the military domain remain subject to critical human revision and the principle of explainability. While governments claim that human control over AI enabled systems is maintained from a doctrinal standpoint, some may be more tempted to increasingly make their weapon systems more autonomous to further military interests.

    3- The balance between mitigating proliferation risks to non-State actors and curbing malicious use versus maintaining the rights of states to acquire AI and dual use technologies. It is critical to avoid introducing any arbitrary international oversight mechanisms or imposing any type of discriminatory export controls.

4- Capacity building component, with the aim of– ensuring proper investment in human capital, technology transfer, and sharing of knowledge and best practices in a way that preserves the right of developing countries to benefit from the potential benefits of the various AI military applications, and with the aim of bridging the digital divide

5- The boundaries of AI in the military domain and its interplay with other new and emerging technologies. It is pertinent to discuss ways to ensure complementarity with other UN led processes including the UN OEWG on the security of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), given for example AI's intersections with cyber operations. Additionally, discussion shall mainly focus on the military domain aside from the wider security domains.

Finally, it is important to ensure inclusivity and equitability in elaborating governance pathways for a responsible, accountable, human centric AI within the UN Multi-stakeholders' perspectives provide key inputs that feed into policy discussions. However, their participation shall be without prejudice to sovereign prerogative of States in the policy making process.