

Statement by India: Review of the Potential Military Applications of Related Technologies in the context of the Group's Work (Presentation on experiences from High Contracting Parties invited)

Monday, 25 March 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of India would like to congratulate you on assuming this important responsibility. India had the honour to Chair the discussions during the past two years and would like to thank all the delegations for their support for our collective work and adopting consensus reports. We hope that a similar spirit would prevail under your leadership to achieve a productive outcome.

- Military applications and specific fields of deployment would be contingent upon technological evolution of LAWS and there may not be any apparent limitations. Thus, emerging technologies in autonomous systems will impact all domains of warfare, land, air and sea.
- However, as a weapon or weapon system per se, whether they are semi autonomous or automated or fully autonomous remains a question mark.
- In the present scenario, it is understood that, some element of human control is always retained in the form of either 'human in the loop' such as the operation of guns and radar guided weapon systems or 'human on the loop' in case of Air Defence missiles and Ballistic Missiles Defences. Certain active protective systems such as radar guided, Close-in-Weapon Systems, actively identify and attack incoming missiles, rockets, aircraft and missiles according to criteria set by human operators. Missile Defence systems have automatic target engaging capabilities and some of the stationary guns have also high degree of autonomy in firing at humans and vehicles. However, these systems too have a fair degree of human element in their construct.
- India is of view that essential human control needs to be ensured in all weapon systems including future weapon systems using emerging technologies. We feel that complete autonomy cannot be given to weaponized platforms due to their potential unpredictability, inability to detect friend or foe in a chaotic and shifting theatre of war, which may result in fratricide and the challenges such platforms pose to military command and control. There might also be issues related to law of armed conflict such as the ability to retract safely during surrender of the enemy and correctly analyzing situations involving civilians or objects protected by IHL using in-build intelligence.

- Responsibility for development, production and deployment of weapon systems with autonomous functionality should rest with the concerned states.
- We also seek to discourage any possibility of the increased resort to usage of LAWS in expectation of lesser casualties or lesser collateral damage.
- My delegation assures you of its full cooperation and support to you as you guide our deliberations.

Thank You Chair.
