

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ANUPAM RAY AT THE GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE AREA OF LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS – Geneva, March 6, 2023

Let me once again congratulate you on assuming the chair.

My delegation assures of you of its fullest support. We have no doubt that this Group under your able guidance and stewardship will be able to achieve meaningful progress in its work in accordance with its mandate. Let me say again that my delegation believes that we are in good hands.

India has engaged, and will continue to engage, constructively in the work of this Group.

We appreciate your efforts to conduct intersessional consultations

We believe that this meeting should work on promoting common understandings and on finding common ground among delegations and identifying differences. This, we believe, is the basis for further meaningful and substantive progress.

At this initial stage, we would like to make the following general points:-

First, we believe, that CCW is the appropriate forum to discuss issues relating to emerging technologies in the area lethal autonomous weapon systems with a view to striking a balance between military necessity and humanitarian imperatives.

The convention can, and has, brought together relevant stakeholders.

Second, it is important to acknowledge the substantial body of work that has been done previously by this Group. The number of proposals that have been received from various High Contracting Parties give us the ability to build on this body of work.

Thirdly, India believes that the work of the Group of Governmental experts should accord priority to augmenting the understandings on characterization relating to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. My delegation emphasizes the importance of uniformity in how these conceptual elements are practically understood and interpreted, in particular when emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems are developed and deployed.

Fourthly, India notes that a number of proposals have been made about a normative and operational framework. My delegation would like, in accordance with the mandate, intensify consideration of these proposals in order to identify possible areas of consensus. India has supported the approach of a political declaration based on the Guiding Principles.

Fifthly, India is a developing country. Several emerging technologies have had a transformative effect on our development efforts. They bring amongst other things, inclusive economic growth, great benefits to society, and empower individuals. India therefore believes that caution is necessary in the deliberations of the Group and believes that blanket “catch- all” condemnation of such technologies is counter-productive.

These are also rapidly evolving technologies and the implications of the use of such technologies in all their aspects too continue to evolve.

Public opinion, my delegation believes, prefers an approach that takes into account the positive impact of such technologies and its evolution.

Sixthly, the issue of emerging technologies in lethal autonomous weapons systems is related, in some of its aspects, to the responsible use of specific technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. My delegation notes that a number of efforts are underway in various platforms that focus on issues raised by these technologies. India has participated in a number of these initiatives. In this context, we would like to draw your attention to a robust exercise being undertaken in India on responsible uses of AI. India is also Chair of the Global Partnership of Artificial Intelligence which is an international initiative to support responsible and human-centric development in the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Seventhly, India reiterates that International Humanitarian Law continues to apply fully to all weapons systems. India accords the highest importance to upholding its obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

Eighth, India notes with appreciation the various proposals and working papers circulated by various delegations. We will examine these proposals with the greatest attention. There are some proposals, however, that have been brought to our attention very recently and we may require some more time to study them. My delegation acknowledges the work of UNIDIR in collating these principles.

Thank you.