**Forum: General Assembly 1 (disarmament commission)**

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**Topic: The question of implementing boundaries on the weaponization of artificial intelligence.**

*Introduction*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most transformative technologies of our time. It is revolutionizing industries, shaping economies and impacting our daily lives in ways we never thought possible

The weaponization of AI refers to using AI in military and warfare contexts, such as autonomous weapons and cyber warfare.

AI weaponization can have various implications and ethical concerns. Can autonomous weapons, as mandated by international law, distinguish between combatants and civilians? Who bears responsibility if an AI-powered weapon causes accidental harm? Is it ethical to assign decisions concerning life and death to machines? These concerns highlight the need for an ethical framework that governs the use of AI in warfare, to ensure that these technologies are used responsibly and in accord with international laws.

*Lethal Autonomous Weapons*

Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs) are weapons systems that use artificial intelligence (AI) to identify, select, and kill human targets without human intervention. Whereas in the case of unmanned military drones the decision to take life is made remotely by a human operator, in the case of lethal autonomous weapons the decision is made by algorithms alone.

LAWs are pre-programmed to kill a specific “target profile” using sensor data, such as facial recognition.

**1.Ethical Concerns:** The Primary concern with LAWs is the ability to make life-and-death decisions regarding human life with no human intervention, which violates basic human rights such as the right to life and security of person.

Algorithmic decision making could be highly destabilizing to both national and international security because it introduces threats of unpredictability, lack of accountability and WMDs (weapons of mass destruction).

The United Nations Secretary General António Guterres agrees that “machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement are politically unacceptable, morally repugnant and should be prohibited by international law.”

**2.Legal Concerns:** Many international laws and treaties govern the use of weapons in armed conflicts, such as the Geneva Conventions, and the use of LAWs raises questions regarding their compliance with these laws. As they directly breach the principles of IHL (international humanitarian law) such as distinction (distinguishing civilians from soldiers).

**3.Accountability:** It would be rather difficult to blame a party or hold them accountable if a LAW violates the laws of armed conflict or causes any harm whether to innocent civilians, public property or even natural habitats and ecosystems.

**4.Escalation and Competition:** The development of LAWs could lead to an arms race. Which is a competition between two or more states to have superior armed forces, concerning the production of weapons and the aim of manufacturing more advanced military technology.

*International response*

The international community has been called upon to respond to the threatening development of AI controlled machinery; to prevent terrible effects related to displacement, injury or death of civilians as well as the destruction of civilian objects.

In 2018, through one GA resolution, the Secretary General established a Group of Governmental Experts, also known as the GGE to monitor and observe responsible state behavior in cybersecurity in the context of international peace and security.

In 2023, a meeting was held by the GGE following the Latin American and Caribbean approach of the Belen Communique (a statement that called for an international legally binding treaty on Autonomous Weapons Systems). In this meeting states engaged in focused discussions that demonstrated progress towards a new international treaty.

Worldwide efforts to address these concerns have been ongoing. Including non-governmental organizations and some nations .The United Nations has held discussions on this issue through the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), where various countries have been debating the need for international regulations and potential limitations on the use of LAWs.

Another example is the Stop Killer Robots campaign, co-founded by Human Rights Watch and now consisting of more than 200 non-governmental organizations in 70 countries.

Looking at military robotics patents granted between 2005 and 2015 the US had the most patents granted, representing 26% of the global total, followed by China (25%) and Russia (17%). However since 2016, China has overtaken the US as leader in the number of such patents per year.

Recently, a revised proposal from the US led group, including Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea and the UK was also submitted. The paper contains a combination of both prohibitions on certain types of AWS, and recognition of the need for appropriate controls and limits, including to affect the duration, scope and scale of force, and to reduce automation bias.

While the proposal contains recognition of the risks posed by AWS and valuable suggestions to safeguard against such risks, the paper continues to shy away from commitment to new legally binding rules. Instead, the proposal is structured to correspond to existing IHL principles.

*The Other Side*

**Benefits of autonomous weapons**

Autonomous weapons are thought to offer some advantages over human controlled weapons in certain situations. For example, when manufactured correctly to minimize errors, they could reduce the risk of casualties and errors for soldiers and civilians, by operating in dangerous or inaccessible environments, or by using more precise and proportional force.

They could also enhance the speed and efficiency of military operations, by processing larger amounts of data and coordinating with other data systems.

Moreover, they could deter or counter autonomous weapons themselves, or adversaries who might exploit the vulnerabilities of human decision-making.

*Future of autonomous weapons*

The future of autonomous weapons is unknown and depends on many factors, such as technological development, political will, social acceptance, and international cooperation.

Some possible scenarios are: a ban autonomous weapons, a restriction on their development and use, an arms race for autonomous weapons, or a combination/mix of autonomous and human-operated weapons.

Each scenario has its own ups and downs, opportunities and challenges. Therefore, it is important to have a constructive and informed debate about the modern weaponization of artificial Intelligence.

Different stakeholders, have different perspectives and interests on this issue, and they need to engage in dialogue and cooperation to find solutions.

Some of the key questions that need to be addressed are:

* What are the goals and motivations for developing and deploying autonomous weapons?
* What are the criteria and standards for ensuring their safety, reliability, and accountability?
* What are the legal and ethical boundaries and safeguards for their use?
* What are the possible scenarios and consequences of their proliferation and misuse?