Chairperson,

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by the Non-Aligned Movement under this cluster.

The fast pace of scientific innovations and emerging weapons technologies carry implications for international peace and security. In many cases, how international law can and should govern their development, deployment and use is proving to be a challenge.

While the international community is justifiably focused on weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, the rapid development of new weapons technologies in the conventional domain, also poses a serious threat to peace, security and stability at the regional and global levels.

Chairperson,

The development of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) remains a particular source of concern. These weapon systems are by nature unethical, because life and death decisions are delegated to machines. They will not be able to comply with international law including International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.

LAWS are rightly being described as the next revolution in military affairs, similar to the introduction of gun-powder and nuclear weapons. They would significantly lower the threshold of going to war and threaten international and regional peace and security. They would also negatively affect progress on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Their likely proliferation to non-state actors and terrorists adds another dangerous dimension to their existence.

Developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence need to be appropriately tackled and regulated. They should not outpace the evolution of regulations governing them. Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence applications if left unregulated can play havoc.

The introduction of LAWS, in our view, would be illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security with grave consequences. In the light of these factors, Pakistan has consistently called for a pre-
emptive ban on their further development and use. States currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and meaningfully engage with the international community in addressing their concerns. The upcoming fifth Review Conference of the CCW provides an excellent opportunity for considering this issue and deciding the next steps in this area.

Chairperson,

In our view, the use of armed drones, especially against civilians, constitutes a violation of international law, the UN Charter, international humanitarian as well as human rights laws. Their use also contravenes State sovereignty and the UN Charter restrictions on legitimate use of force for self-defense. The UN Human Rights Council, jurists and human rights groups have all opposed armed drones targeting civilians through ‘signature strikes’ and termed their use as tantamount to extrajudicial killings.

The proliferation of armed drone technology is making their use ever more dangerous and widespread - with the potential to threaten international security. Even more challenging would be the task of preventing and deterring non-state actors and terrorists from acquiring armed drones. The development and use of armed drones, therefore, needs to be brought under international regulations and control.

Chairperson,

Similarly, the growing prospect of cyber warfare also needs to be addressed urgently before such weapons breakdown the entire edifice of international security. In recent years, the use of information and communications technologies have not only been used for surveillance and espionage, but also as a means of waging cyber attacks. Misuse and un-regulated use of ICT could lead to serious implications for international peace and security in the event of a cyber attack launched on critical infrastructure. The hostile use of cyber technologies is fast approaching the stage where it can be characterized as weapon of mass destruction, and not just disruption.

As a member, Pakistan remained positively and constructively engaged in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts mandated by resolution 68/243 and welcomes the 2015 report of this GGE. This year as well, we have co-sponsored the draft resolution L.17 tabled by the Russian Federation entitled ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’. We were disappointed at not being included in the GGE established by UNGA resolution 70/237.

Four GGEs have concluded their work in this area while the fifth one is in progress. It is now high time that this work being done in the smaller setting of a GGE be brought to a broader multilateral setting and representative forums like the CD and the General Assembly. The views of all member states, irrespective of their level of development, are vitally important and need to be taken on board for the development of universal norms in this area.

I thank you.