



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

by

**Mr. Khalil Hashmi,
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the
United Nations, New York
at the
First Committee Thematic Debate
on Conventional Weapons
(68th Session of the UNGA)**

New York, 29 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

While nuclear weapons are maintained primarily for deterrence purposes, conventional weapons are actually used on a daily basis to kill human beings. They fuel conflicts, destabilize states and cause pain and suffering to humanity worldwide.

The world military expenditure fell in 2012, for the first time since 1998. The world total is estimated to have been around 1.75 trillion US Dollars, which is 0.4 percent lower in real terms than in 2011. The 2008 global financial crisis and subsequent economic turmoil, combined with the winding down of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, might have contributed to this development.

However, this small decline in global military spending is no reason to celebrate. Collectively, we still spent close to 3 percent of the world's GDP on military expenditure. The last ten years witnessed a spike of fifty percent in the global spending on conventional weapons.

Ironically the weapons that propel and sustain conflicts come from areas that enjoy peace. Only four countries account for two thirds of global arms exports, while major importers are the developing countries, mostly in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Yet another irony is that the total UN Budget constitutes a paltry 3 percent of the world's military expenditure. Hence we are spending 33 times more on breeding, exacerbating and maintaining conflict than preventing it.

Mr. Chairman,

Another disturbing trend is the development of new types of conventional weapons like the Lethal Autonomous Robots (LARs), and the use of armed drones which cause indiscriminate killing of civilians. The use of drones, especially outside the zone of conflict or the battlefield, not only poses a legal challenge but also has serious human rights and humanitarian implications. It needs to be stopped immediately. The use of drones needs to be brought under international regulation before it spirals out of control.

Similarly, LARs, which would choose and fire on pre-programmed targets on their own without any human intervention, pose a fundamental challenge to the protection of civilians and the notion of affixation of responsibility. They could alter traditional warfare in unimaginable ways. Their development needs to be

addressed at the relevant international fora including at the UN and the CCW Conference of State Parties.

The states that currently possess and use such weapons cannot afford to be complacent that such capabilities will not proliferate over time and hence they too shall become vulnerable unless such weapons' production is curtailed forthwith under an international regime.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has made several efforts to regulate conventional armaments. Different bodies of the UN have adopted numerous resolutions, guidelines and decisions related to conventional arms. Earlier this year, the UNGA adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The lack of consensus in its final approval reflected the complex and intricate nature of conventional arms issues.

Pakistan voted in favour of the Treaty in the earnest hope that the ATT will be able to better regulate the conventional arms trade, thereby reducing human suffering, without impacting on the self defence needs of states. We expect that the treaty will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner in accordance with its Principles, and that the subjective criteria included in the treaty would not be abused politically. This would be the key to promote the effectiveness and universality of the treaty.

As highlighted by Pakistan in the past, the pursuit of a partial approach, i.e. the separation of the motivation for arms production from the controls on their trade, would only yield partial results. An exclusive focus on managing the effects of the trade in arms, without adequately addressing the causes that propel such trade in the first place does not offer a comprehensive solution. We have to address both the supply and the demand side of the conventional arms equation.

The history and politics of arms regulation dictate a comprehensive approach which takes into account the priorities and security interests of all states. It is essential that the pursuit of elimination of nuclear weapons does not give way to the unworkable conventional imbalance that spawned the two world wars during the last century.

The Final Document of SSOD-I provides a clear distinction in this regard: I quote "Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on balanced reduction of forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a

view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all states to protect their security” Unquote.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is a party to the CCW and all of its five Protocols including the Amended Protocol-II. The CCW has made significant progress to make this treaty an indispensable element of contemporary humanitarian, disarmament and arms control machinery, as well as a forum to consider how best to protect both civilians and soldiers from the effect of such weapons.

The delicate balance of these instruments – to minimize human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of states – must be maintained. The human suffering resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines can be minimized if maximum number of states commit themselves to the successful implementation of CCW’s Amended Protocol-II. Similarly, the CCW provides an ideal platform to deal with the subject of cluster munitions since it harmonizes genuine humanitarian concerns with the security imperatives of states.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
