Delegation from the Republic of Colombia
Position Paper for the General Assembly

The issues before the General Assembly of the United Nations are: The Role of Emerging Technologies in International Security and Disarmament, Improving Mechanisms for Accountability and Transparency within the UN System and Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women. Especially, the topic of international security is important for us, because a constructive solving of this issue is vital for the prevention of violence and the preservation of peace. As the Colombian writer Samael Aun Weor once stated: ,,Peace cannot be the result of violence".

I. Emerging technologies in international security and disarmament

The appearance of new technologies on the battlefield can cause serious damage to international security efforts. Especially fully autonomous weapons change the style of warfare significant elements thoroughly, as this weaponry makes the decision to go to war easier, shifts the burden of conflict even further on to civilians and can autonomously decide who lives and dies, thereby crossing a moral threshold. Fully autonomous weapons could make tragic mistakes with unanticipated consequences that could inflame tensions. Despite being aware of these risks, the USA and other nations blocked a ban on autonomous weaponry in autumn of 2018, since these military powers want to explore the possibilities of these new technologies and even denied further negotiations on this topic. The behavior of these modern imperialists is truly alarming, and it is the duty of the international community to act decisively against further isolation and non-participation on this topic. Thus, Colombia is ready to be a participant in this international response, since we are bundling huge efforts and measures to limit further expansion of autonomous weapons and their research, for example by being part of the Campaign "Stop Killer Robots".

The role of emerging technologies in international security and disarmament has been on the agenda of the United Nation's Agenda since 1988. In order to address the problems of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), two informal meetings of experts were held during the Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 2014 and 2015. The parties attending these conventions, including Colombia, elaborated first definitions of LAWS, discussed upon social, moral and technical standards and debated over the civilian use of the autonomous technology. Subsequently, a third informal meeting took place in 2016, where the participating states, including Colombia, argued about further definitions regarding LAWS and the relationship between LAWS and the international humanitarian law (IHL). Apart from that, Colombia is missing further efforts of the international community to address the issue, especially by the mentioned modern military powers, which abstain from essential negotiations on this topic.

Since the issue of LAWS is highly discussed within informal expert-circles, but several states deny vital negotiations on this subject, Colombia proposes the implementation of a new discussion panel at the next Conference on Disarmament (CD). This discussion panel shall consist of the 20 UN-Member States with the highest military expenditure, which includes Colombia. These countries shall meet under the framework of the CD in order to further discuss possibilities, dangers and limitations of LAWS. The goal of these talks shall be to agree on a memorandum, which shall contain the commitment to a reduction of the risk of civilian casualties resulting from the use of LAWS in warfare, a draft of common values and moral ethics considering the research of LAWS and an agreement on basic standards for the disarmament of already existing LAWS. In order to secure the constructive participation of every state attending the convention and to point out the importance of these talks, the Secretary General shall be present as a supervisor.

II. Improving Mechanisms for Accountability and Transparency within the UN System

Improving the accountability and transparency within the UN would lead to a more effective work of this international organization. Despite increased efforts in this particular field, most of the work remains unfinished, because UN entities are often refusing or delaying vital reform packages, even after personnel – so called whistleblowers - drew attention to the poor situation of transparency within the body. As a reaction to this, UN-authorities made limited proposals, which aimed to ensure transparency and adhere to the transparency measures put into place for all UN employees, but on some occasions, whistleblowers were disregarded, relegated or fired. This problem as well could be solved by decisive reforms, but the UN is not adhering to reform proposals. Colombia is bundling big efforts, in order to reduce the extent of retaliation

against whistleblowers within our system. Thus, we support the increased endeavors of the UN-System to provide a transparent and secure work place for its employees.

As the UN has been concerned about the issue in the past, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/276 (2009) on “Accountability framework, enterprise risk management and internal control framework, results-based management framework,” highlighting the importance and necessity of accountability in the UN. This major step is in compliance with Colombia’s efforts, to improve the reliability of state institutions. In order to further improve the monitoring of the measure implementations, annual resolutions were passed by the General Assembly: The resolutions 68/264 (2014), 69/272 (2015), 70/255 (2016), and 71/283 (2017) on “Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat,” review the annual progress report of the Secretary-General on accountability within the UN Secretariat. Furthermore, under the Secretary-General’s Bulletin on protection against retaliation (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1) the Ethics Office protects staff from being punished for reporting misconduct. Colombia is fully supporting all measurement regarding accountability, transparency and whistleblowers undertaken by the UN.

Colombia is nevertheless missing steps of the International community to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. Facing this major obstacle for an improved transparency within the UN, Colombia proposes to start an internal UN investigation-campaign, called “Roll-Up”, dealing with this issue. This campaign shall be financed by and within the competence of the UN Ethics Office, which shall expand its personnel and their financing base, in order to start this campaign, and shall last five years. In this period, all organizations of the UN shall be investigated and condemned publicly, if they are found guilty of defaming whistleblowers. This all shall be determined by internal observation of the working process of these organizations and by investigating internal documents regarding the organization’s employees.

III. Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women

Colombia is alarmed by the still existing worldwide violence against women, especially in the domestic context. Regarding this, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a report in 2017, which estimated the number of women exposed to violence by their partners at about 1 in 3 worldwide. Furthermore, 38% percent of murders of women are committed by their intimate partners. Therefore, the problem of domestic violence against women remains highly relevant and it is the duty of the international community to act decisively against it. Colombia has been targeting domestic violence through several laws since 1990, for example through law 294 in 1996 which aims at combatting domestic violence and through criminalizing marital rape in 1996. Adding to these regulations, Colombia also started campaigns to educate its population on the issue of domestic violence, in order to prevent further expansion and to reach a general rejection regarding violence against women.

The international community has taken major steps on the improvement of this problem in the past. One important mark was the Declaration of Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW), which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1993 and defined the frame of violence against women, including violence within private and family life. Colombia has in this context passed the mentioned laws to tackle violence against women. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly also specifically addressed domestic violence in Resolution (58/147) (2004) with Colombia’s support, entitled “Elimination of domestic violence against women.” In this important resolution, the General Assembly, recognizing that domestic violence is a human rights issue, strongly condemned all forms of domestic violence against women such as girls and called for an elimination of violence in the family. Nevertheless, Colombia is missing an intensification of the UN’s efforts on this topic.

It is crucial for Colombia, that the international efforts to tackle domestic violence against women are further developed and specialized. Therefore, we propose to establish a subsidiary body to UN Women, called United Nations Group on Domestic Violence against Woman (UNGDVA). This working group shall be financed by UN Women and shall consist of national experts already dealing with this issue. The working group shall meet annually in the Central Hall in London, Great Britain, since this historical place was the location of one of the first meetings of women delegates in 1946. The group’s work shall be to discuss further mechanisms to reduce domestic violence against women and to publish reports on the situation in countries, which are not tackling the issue enough. The goal of these reports will be, to pressurize the governments of these countries to start acting upon the elimination of domestic violence against women.