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**Remarks of Dr Yasmin Afina, Researcher, UNIDIR**

**At the Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting: “Harnessing safe, inclusive, trustworthy AI for the maintenance of international peace and security”**

**4 April 2025, 3:00 PM (EST)**

Distinguished Chair,  
Members of the Security Council,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to Greece, France and the Republic of Korea for organizing this meeting, and for the invitation extended to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

I also wish to thank Armenia, Italy, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for co-hosting this event, as well as Mr Giannis Mastrogeorgiou and Ms Charlotte Scaddan for sharing their insights today.

This meeting takes place at a critical juncture for the governance of artificial intelligence in international peace and security.

As with any other powerful technology introduced to the military and security domains, the effects and implications of AI will be deep, diverse and far-reaching.

AI holds great promise for fostering international, regional and national peace and security. But it is also the source of grave concerns, worries and fears. These two statements are by no means mutually exclusive.

With innovation and progress proceeding apace, the international community, States and the wider multistakeholder ecosystem are increasingly invested in ensuring the responsible development, deployment and use of this technology.

Mere months ago, on 24 December 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 79/239 on artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security.

The adoption of this resolution represented a pivotal moment for multilateral discussions on AI. For the first time, the international peace and security community was invited to reflect on the impact of the development, deployment and use of AI beyond lethal autonomous weapons systems.

This amounted to a welcome recognition of the far wider range of existing and potential military applications enabled by this powerful technology.

But it is important to note that States have also driven other key initiatives in this area, two of which I will be highlighting.



First, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea hosted, in 2023 and 2024 respectively, the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) Summit. This year's edition will be hosted by Spain in September.

And second, last February France held its own AI Action Summit, which followed on from the 2024 AI Seoul Summit in the Republic of Korea and the 2023 AI Safety Summit hosted at Bletchley Park in the United Kingdom. One of the key outcomes of the AI Action Summit, the Paris Declaration on Maintaining Human Control in AI-enabled Weapon Systems, has already been adopted and endorsed by 27 States from Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within the context of the United Nations, UNIDIR has been pioneering research at the intersection of AI and international peace and security for many years, even before this topic consolidated its status on the international policy agenda.

Through our work, UNIDIR has been quick to understand the need for an independent, inclusive and trusted platform to allow for meaningful engagement with the multistakeholder community where a wealth of critical expertise can be found.

In March 2024, the Institute – in partnership with Microsoft – established the Roundtable for AI, Security and Ethics, or RAISE, to serve as its flagship initiative for fostering multistakeholder, cross-regional dialogue on AI for international peace and security.

Just last week and under the RAISE umbrella, UNIDIR convened its inaugural Global Conference on AI, Security and Ethics. With speakers from all P5 countries and every UN regional group, from Singapore to South Africa, from Ecuador to India, the two days of the conference gathered nearly 500 in-person participants, with over a thousand more joining online.

This is a testament to the clear importance that States and the wider multistakeholder community place on ensuring that AI technologies are developed, deployed and used in ways that foster international peace and security.

The conference also confirmed the relevance of the following six priority areas, identified by UNIDIR through its wide-ranging, forward-looking research and activities in this area.

1. First, there is a **need to build capacity on AI for international peace and security**, along with a solid base of shared knowledge.

To be meaningful, capacity-building efforts must be designed in close consultation with target audiences. And appropriate resources and structures must also be given over to the reinforcement of existing capacity rather than focusing solely on the new.

These efforts must take into account the inherent differences in States' own policy landscapes, strategic priorities, values, ambitions, cultures, legal traditions and histories.

2. Second, whether between States and stakeholders or in the technology itself, **trust will be critical in fostering international peace and security**. However, for it to be actionable,



the concept of trust needs to be further explained as the development, deployment and use of AI intensifies.

In the context of AI for international peace and security, trust can be broken down in at least three key layers, each requiring dedicated and deliberate efforts: trust between States, trust between the users and the developers, and trust in the technology. Such efforts would include the incentivization of responsible behaviour, as well as a focus on concrete use cases that reveal key sources of distrust.

3. Third, there is a **need to unpack the human element across a technology's life cycle**, as well as its implications for issues such as accountability, trust, system performance and system reliability.
4. Fourth, there is a pressing **need for greater understanding of the symbiotic relationship between AI and data**, underlining how data practices can constitute key enablers for a responsible AI ecosystem.

The establishment of clear frameworks and solutions for digital forensics, for example, can ensure the maintenance of accountability and responsibility.

But many concerns and risks still need to be addressed more fully, not least those stemming from harmful biases in datasets.

5. Fifth, **the governance of AI for international peace and security at the international, regional and national levels must adopt a whole-of-lifecycle approach** that extends beyond use.

Legal and ethical considerations must be embedded from the outset and “by design” in the conceptualization, development, testing and evaluation of these technologies. International law in particular cannot – and must not – be treated as an afterthought.

Further attention must also be paid to the end of the life cycle. Robust decommissioning protocols and processes can help to minimize risks around proliferation, diversion and the exploitation of vulnerabilities, as well as mitigating unintended consequences from the degradation of a given system's performance.

6. Sixth, **the development, integration, deployment and use of AI for international peace and security must be appraised** along with the destabilizing effects that these technologies can enable, induce or multiply.

AI can be both a force-multiplier and a threat-multiplier, with risks for the integrity of the information space, of inadvertent escalation, and of sensitive technologies falling into the hands of non-State armed groups and malicious actors.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Developed, deployed and used responsibly and in accordance with international law, artificial intelligence holds great promise as a means of enhancing international peace and security.



The increased affordability of these technologies, and the advent of open-source AI, could pave the way for more equitable access to such opportunities. These extend far beyond the military domain and into wider security applications that comply with international law, notably international human rights law.

These might include, for instance, more effective support to counter-terrorism activities, border security, counter-piracy efforts, or humanitarian responses to natural disasters.

However, States and the wider stakeholder community alike also share a host of concerns about the risks and challenges that these technologies pose for international peace and security.

Cyber threats, escalation risks, disruptions in the information environment, technological biases, overdependency, structural risks, profound economic and societal implications – these risks are all real, and they apply both during armed conflict and in peacetime.

Looking ahead, it is clear that ensuring the responsible application of these technologies for international peace and security is a priority, as recognized by General Assembly resolution 79/239, the Pact for the Future, and discussions on this issue at numerous Security Council meetings since 2023.

The Council Members and the wider community of UN Member States and observer States might thus consider the following steps, going forward.

- First, as UNIDIR has also suggested in the area of cyberthreats, the Council could follow its practice from other issue areas by convening an annual session dedicated specifically to assessing the technological landscape in the field of artificial intelligence, as well as its implications for international peace and security.
- Second, there is great value in providing independent platforms for discussions that transcend disciplines, sectors, borders, and geopolitical divisions.

The United Nations are uniquely well-placed to provide spaces for collective action that can reinforce international peace and security while ensuring complementarity with an array of ongoing processes and initiatives.

- Third, there is particular utility in convening dialogue at the regional and sub-regional levels to exchange information, share best practices, and foster truly international cooperation.
- Fourth, we highly encourage Member States to develop, implement, review and update national strategies that frame their approach both to harnessing the opportunities and to addressing the risks of artificial intelligence for international, regional and national peace and security.

UNIDIR stands ready to assist States in this critical endeavour, be that through our impartial, evidence-based research, our unique convening power, or our tailored capacity-building programmes that ensure no one is left behind.

Thank you for your attention.