



# CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS



## Report on Activities

Convention on Conventional Weapons Annual Meeting of High Contracting Parties  
United Nations Geneva  
13-14 November 2014

## **About this report**

This report on activities by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots at the annual meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) held at the United Nations in Geneva on 13-14 November 2014 covers outreach in the lead-up to and during the meeting. It reviews government statements addressing the CCW mandate to hold talks on “lethal autonomous weapons systems” on 13-17 April 2015.

This report was prepared by Campaign to Stop Killer Robots coordinator Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch from statements posted online by WILPF’s Reaching Critical Will Project and with the assistance of notes provided by Bonnie Docherty of Human Rights Watch and Harvard Law School’s International Human Rights Clinic and her students Courtney Paterson and Yuanmei Lu.

For more information, please see the campaign’s website: [www.stopkillerrobots.org](http://www.stopkillerrobots.org)

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# Overview

## 1. Agreement on the 2015 mandate

The decision by the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) to continue deliberations on killer robots is contained in Paragraph 36 of the final report of the CCW annual meeting adopted on 14 November 2014:

The Meeting decided to convene under the overall responsibility of the Chair an informal Meeting of Experts of up to five days during the week of 13 to 17 April 2015 to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. The Chair of the Meeting of Experts will, under his or her own responsibility, submit a report to the 2015 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention, objectively reflecting the discussions held.<sup>1</sup>

The first informal meeting of experts took place at the UN in Geneva on 13-16 May 2014 and was preceded by smaller meetings and consultations by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Chatham House, and others.<sup>2</sup> In October 2014, at the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in New York, some 23 nations expressed support for continued work on the matter.<sup>3</sup>

Poland's Ambassador Remigiusz A. Henczel served as chair of the Convention on Conventional Weapons meeting of high contracting parties held 13-14 November 2014. He convened an hour-long session of "informal consultations" on the morning of 13 November to take views on the proposed 2015 mandate on lethal autonomous weapons systems, where he proposed that the experts meeting be chaired by Germany. At least 17 nations provided input with all expressing support for continued work in 2015 and most indicating they were "flexible" on the matter of timing, with many requesting five days of talks, rather than four.<sup>4</sup>

Later that morning, during the opening general exchange of views of the CCW's annual meeting of high contracting parties, almost all of the 30 states that spoke indicated their support for the

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<sup>1</sup> See Final Report of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 2014 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties available at: <http://bit.ly/1utlxjv>

<sup>2</sup> The previous 2013 report read: "The Meeting declared that the Chairperson will convene in 2014 a four-day informal Meeting of Experts, from 13 to 16 May 2014, to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. He will, under his own responsibility, submit a report to the 2014 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention, objectively reflecting the discussions held." See Final Report of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 2013 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties (CCW/MSP/2013/10) available at: <http://bit.ly/1jRKxvj>

<sup>3</sup> Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Canada, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and the USA. See: <http://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2014/10/nyunga/>

<sup>4</sup> Australia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Hungary, India, Ireland, Netherlands, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, UK, and USA.

talks on killer robots.<sup>5</sup> Colombia and Palestine spoke on the matter for the first time. Brazil, Iraq, and Venezuela spoke, but did not provide their views on killer robots.

That afternoon, Ambassador Simon-Michel of France who chaired the 2014 informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems reported. In his [report](#), he identified several areas for further study or deliberation, including:

- The concept of meaningful human control and notion of predictability;
- The key ethical question of delegating the right to decide on life and death to a machine;
- The “various” views on the possibility the these weapons would being able to comply with rules of international law and “different” views on the adequacy of existing law;
- Weapons reviews, including Article 36 of Additional Protocol I (1977) to the 1949 Geneva Conventions;
- Accountability gap, including issue of responsibility at the State level or at an individual level;
- Whether the weapons could change the threshold of use of force.

In the discussion that followed, 17 states spoke on the matter in addition to the European Union.<sup>6</sup>

The mandate was adopted by consensus in the final report of the meeting on Friday, 14 November at 3.45pm local time.

## **2. Government views**

Most statements at the CCW meeting on 13 November, especially in the informal session, indicated support for the 2015 experts meeting and addressed procedural questions, such as whether there ought to be four or five days of talks and if formal UN documentation services for it should be funded. Yet many nations also used the opportunity to express their views on what the deliberations should address and indicated their views on lethal autonomous weapons systems. This section reviews some of the more substantive highlights of the statements.

Many nations raised questions or concerns with lethal autonomous weapons systems and some suggested specific topics for further consideration at the 2015 experts meeting. Austria proposed looking at the consequences on international peace and security, compliance with international law as well as “philosophical and ethical questions.” India said the weapons should be assessed from the viewpoint of “their impact on international security” and called for the meeting to look beyond compatibility with international law and consider “the dictates of public conscience, one of the key principles of international humanitarian law.” France proposed further consideration of the state of current research and “what constitutes the notion of autonomy” as well as “the implementation and enforcement of international law including respect for the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution, and the question of responsibility and accountability.” The Holy See said “consideration merely from the military viewpoint would be artificially reductive” and described a global approach consider scientific, legal, cultural,

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<sup>5</sup> Argentina, Australia, Austria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, France, Germany, Holy See, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, and US, as well as the European Union.

<sup>6</sup> Austria, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Russia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

economic, ethical, and humanitarian dimensions as “indispensable.” China proposed “in-depth study to look at definition, scope, legal application.”

The US sought a focus on the policy, technical, legal, and operational challenges related to autonomy. It said that looking at “the weapons review process could provide the basis to identify fundamental issues and provide guidance for states that are considering any new weapons system” and indicated that “such a discussion could result in a set of best practices applicable to the future development of lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

Many states embraced the principle of meaningful human control. Austria said, “weapons systems without meaningful human control are in contravention to international humanitarian law.” Croatia said, “while there is recognition that humans must retain ultimate control, more detailed deliberation is needed about what constitutes adequate, meaningful, or appropriate human control over the use of force. Ireland said, “we consider the concept of meaningful human control to be essential ... and an area which requires further and deeper consideration.” Chile highlighted “an ethical imperative for ensuring meaningful human control with regard to decisions to use lethal force” and affirmed “autonomous systems should not be given decision-making power to take human life.” The Netherlands said it would be valuable to further explore the concept in relation to the targeting process. Germany said, “we regard the retention of human control over the decision about life and death as indispensable.”

India, however, warned against “a rush to judgment on meaningful human control” as this “would run risk of legitimizing weapons.” While flagging that “endorsing the notion of meaningful human control is premature” India said it would not object to discussing the term further in 2015. Israel did not address the concept of meaningful human control, but talked about “legal use” of a lethal autonomous weapon system and said “human judgment exists all throughout the various phases of development, testing, review, approval, and decision to employ a weapon system, including an autonomous one.”

Some nations reflected on the end-goal of the CCW process on killer robots, which began in November 2013. Croatia said the talks have the “potential to eventually grow in a legally-binding instrument” and have “ushered in a new era of hope for the international disarmament community.” Cuba again called on the CCW to “work towards achieving a legally binding agreement” banning autonomous weapons. The Holy See commented that “the automation of war and therefore the risk of its dehumanization should prompt States parties toward a deeper reflection and eventually to a decision to enact the indispensable measures that are necessary.” India said “we would like the CCW process to emerge strengthened from these discussions” with “increased systemic controls on international armed conflicts embedded in international law in a manner that does not widen the technology gap amongst states.”

The US said “it is still too early to determine where these discussions might or should lead,” but expressed support for additional CCW expert discussions. China described lethal autonomous weapon systems as “as an issue with growing attention” and said the deliberations of this “very complicated” topic are needed “to deepen understanding and build consensus among the state parties.” Russia was the only nation to express “severe doubts” as to what could develop during

the discussions, warning, “The further we go into discussions—even at the informal level—the greater the expectations will be from international community in terms of results.”

Several nations proposed work outside of the CCW in the Human Rights Council, including Austria, Ireland, and South Africa. Austria described the deliberations in both bodies during the past year as “important and complementary” and urged that the matter “be treated with a sense of urgency in the relevant UN fora on the basis of a multidisciplinary approach.” The Holy See described the topic as “a matter of great importance” that is “larger than the scope of the CCW.”

Croatia was the only nation to explicitly acknowledge the gender diversity concerns raised following the all-male panels or “manpanels” that characterized the 2014 experts meeting. It urged for greater effort to “ensure gender diversity in deliberations relating to disarmament, peace and security discussions by engaging and including non-male experts.” Switzerland said, “future discussions could also benefit from a greater range of experts participating in possible panel discussions.”

There were many expressions of support for the role played by civil society in informing and spurring the debate, which are not cited here due to lack of space.

During the meeting, other nations made only brief statements with respect to killer robots that expressed support for talks in 2015, including Australia, China, Colombia, and Italy. Palestine talked about Israel’s use of armed drones in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Several CCW states that spoke on killer robots in 2013 or at the 2014 experts meeting did not speak on the matter in formal sessions of the annual meeting, such as Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Ghana, Greece, Lithuania, and Ukraine.

Few nations used the November 2014 CCW meeting to elaborate on their domestic policy consideration on the issue. The Netherlands was one of the only states at the meeting to commit to share the results of its own national research—on the matter of ‘meaningful human control’—with the 2015 experts meeting.

More than half of the 52 nations that have spoken publicly on killer robots since May 2013 have engaged consistently on the topic at the CCW and elsewhere, including: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Holy See, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, and US.<sup>7</sup> Yet only the UK and US have issued policy

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<sup>7</sup> During 2013, a total of 44 states spoken publicly for the first time in a multilateral forum on the matter of fully autonomous weapons (date of first statement): Algeria (30 May), Argentina (30 May), Australia (14 November), Austria (30 May), Belarus (14 November), Belgium (11 November), Brazil (30 May), Canada (11 November), China (30 May), Costa Rica (29 October), Croatia (15 November), Cuba (30 May), Ecuador (29 October), Egypt (30 May), France (30 May), Germany (30 May), Ghana (14 November), Greece (29 October), Holy See (14 November), India (30 October), Indonesia (30 May), Iran (30 May), Ireland (29 October), Israel (15 November), Italy (14 November), Japan (29 October), Lithuania (14 November), Madagascar (14 November), Mexico (30 May), Morocco (30 May), Netherlands (29 October), New Zealand (30 October), Pakistan (30 May), Russia (30 May), Sierra Leone (30 May), South Africa (30 October), South Korea (14 November), Spain (11 November), Sweden (30 May), Switzerland (30 May), Turkey (14 November), Ukraine (14 November), UK (30 May), and US (30 May). During 2014, eight states spoke on the topic for the first time: Bulgaria (23 October), Colombia (13 November),

on autonomous weapons systems. Five nations have endorsed the call for a preemptive ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems (Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Holy See, and Pakistan), while many more have affirmed the principle of human control with respect to these weapons.

### **3. Campaign activities**

While supporting the proposal to continue CCW talks on lethal autonomous weapons systems, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has expressed its disappointment at the lack of ambition of the mandate, which remains at the lowest-possible level of formality for a CCW process and adds just one more day of talks over the course of an entire year. Campaigners have also urged that the 2015 experts meeting be genuinely inclusive, especially with the participation of women experts.

Following the conclusion of the May 2014 experts meeting, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots undertook significant outreach to promote agreement for continuing the diplomatic talks next year while at the same time urged that future deliberations be more substantive and gender inclusive.

Highlights from this outreach include:

- Significant activities around the October 2014 session of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, including a Campaign to Stop Killer Robots media briefing (October 20), side event (October 21), plenary statement (October 28), and bilaterals with France, Poland, the US, and others;
- Campaign representatives attended relevant meetings convened by UNIDIR, the UN Secretary General's disarmament advisory board, Geneva Academy, and CETMONS;
- The August 2014 statement by Clearpath Robotics pledging not to participate in the development of fully autonomous weapons systems, which attracted strong interest from governments at First Committee;
- An October 29 Action Alert by Amnesty International to its network urging support for a renewed CCW mandate, national policy development, and implementation of the Heyns report.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots made numerous contributions during the CCW's annual meetings held in the week of 10 November, including:

- The launch by PAX of a new inter-faith call to action to stop fully autonomous weapons, endorsed by Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and 70 other faith leaders;
- A Campaign to Stop Killer Robots side event by Jose Henriquez of Pax Christi International, ICRAC's Noel Sharkey, and Laura Boillot, Article 36 that drew a strong turn-out by more than 80 delegates, but no Q & A;
- Plenary statements by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots coordinator and by its member NGOs Article 36, Human Rights Watch, and the International Committee for Robot Arms Control;

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Czech Republic (13 May), Finland (22 October), Guatemala (16 May), Mali (13 May), Norway (13 May), and Palestine (13 November).

- A focus on the gender diversity challenge at the CCW at a women's caucus meeting convened by WILPF on November 11 and Article 36's new materials and website urging an end to manpanels.
- Regular communication with Poland as CCW chair as well as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which houses the CCW implementation support unit. Daily morning meetings for interested campaigners to collectively discuss developments and review the day ahead;
- An Association des Correspondents Auprès des Nations Unies (ACANU) media briefing with the campaign representatives and media outreach by the campaign and member organizations that helped attract interest in the US, UK, and the Netherlands, including a front-page article by *The New York Times* (see annex);
- Monitoring and real-time reporting on the deliberations via social media and Reaching Critical Will's dedicated CCW [website](#);
- Bilateral meetings with diplomats from various countries.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is preparing to engage extensively with governments in the lead-up to and during the CCW experts meeting on 13-17 April 2015.

In addition, outside of the CCW process, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots calls on all nations to:

- Implement the recommendations on autonomous weapons contained in the 2013 and 2014 reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, including the call for a moratorium on fully autonomous weapons until new international law is achieved.
- Develop and articulate national policies on fully autonomous weapons in consultation with relevant actors, including civil society. They should articulate other ways that these weapons can be addressed at the international, regional, and national levels and become champions of the ban call.

For more information, see:

- This [report](#) by [Reaching Critical Will](#), which also collected the statements contained in the annex.
- This [Storify](#) prepared from tweets by [@BanKillerRobots](#) and governments/campaigners [tweeting](#) the meeting.
- This [short campaign film](#) about the CCW that has been viewed more than 1,500 times.
- The web posts on the [CCW outcome](#) (15 Nov.) and [First UN meeting](#) (5 May 2014).
- This [CCW Backgrounder](#) and other [statements](#) by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

## Annex I: Selected Media Coverage

The annual meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its decision on lethal autonomous weapons systems received some coverage in English-speaking media outlets, especially following a 12 November front page article by *The New York Times* science writer John Markoff, which also appeared in the also appeared in *The International New York Times* and the UK's *Sunday Observer* insert on 23 November.

There was also media coverage in the UK's *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, Russia's *RT*, and in Germany and the Netherlands. An op ed issued after the meeting by campaign coordinator Mary Wareham was published in print in the *Buenos Aires Herald* (Argentina), *Cyprus Mail*, (Finland), *The Budapest Business Journal* (Hungary), *Japan Today*, *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), *Peruvian Times*, and *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia).

### Selected articles (in chronological order)

John Markoff, "Fearing Bombs That Can Pick Whom to Kill," *The New York Times*, 12 November 2014. [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/12/science/weapons-directed-by-robots-not-humans-raise-ethical-questions.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/12/science/weapons-directed-by-robots-not-humans-raise-ethical-questions.html?_r=0)

Ryu Spaeth, "The U.S. military is testing missiles that can steer themselves with artificial intelligence," *The Week*, 12 November 2014. <http://theweek.com/speedreads/index/271836/speedreads-the-us-military-is-testing-missiles-that-can-steer-themselves-with-artificial-intelligence>

Matthew Waxman and Kenneth Anderson, "NYT on Autonomous Weapons and Ways to Regulate Them," *Lawfare Blog*, 12 November 2014. <http://www.lawfareblog.com/2014/11/nyt-on-autonomous-weapons-and-ways-to-regulate-them/>

Noel Brinkerhoff, "Weapons that Choose Their Own Kill Targets are Wave of Future...and Already in Use," *ALLGOV*, 13 November 2014. <http://www.allgov.com/news/top-stories/weapons-that-choose-their-own-kill-targets-are-wave-of-futureand-already-in-use-141113?news=854804>

ICRC, "Q & A: Autonomous weapon systems," 12 November 2014. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/autonomous-weapon-systems-challenge-human-control-over-use-force>

Ed Pilkington, "'Killer robots' need to be strictly monitored, nations warn at UN meeting," *The Guardian*, 13 November 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/13/killer-robots-strictly-monitored-un-meeting-geneva>

Thomas Von Frankenfeld, "When robots go to war: moral issue," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 13 November 2014. <http://www.abendblatt.de/meinung/article134282027/Frage-der-Moral-Wenn-Roboter-in-den-Krieg-ziehen.html>

“UN sounds alarm on rise of autonomous 'killer robots,” *RT*, 14 November 2014.  
<http://rt.com/news/205539-un-drones-us-civilians/>

Tom Chivers, “Should future wars be fought by killer robots?” *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/11230677/Should-future-wars-be-fought-by-killer-robots.html>

Jeremy Bender, “Countries Around The World Are Worried About 'Killer Robots,”” *Business Insider*, 14 November 2014. <http://www.businessinsider.com/progress-towards-killer-robots-moving-fast-2014-11>

Willem Staes, “Game of Drones: the automation van ‘Killer Robots,”” *Mondiaal Nieuws*, 14 November 2014. <http://www.mo.be/analyse/game-drones-de-groeiende-automatisering-van-killer-robots>

Dan Maduri, “Should Computers Decide Who Lives and Who Dies?” *NewsTalk Florida*, 14 November 2014. <http://www.newstalkflorida.com/robots-deciding-humans-kill/> (Audio Interview)

Sarah Sicard, “[Roboticist: Lethal Autonomy 'Inevitable.](#)” *National Defense Magazine*, November 2014. <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1668>

Michael C. Horowitz and Paul Scharre, “Are Precision-Guided Munitions Really "Killer Robots?”” *Politico*, 19 November 2014. [http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/11/killer-robots-save-lives-113010\\_full.html](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/11/killer-robots-save-lives-113010_full.html)

Mary Wareham, “Killer Robots: Why The World Should Ban Autonomous Weapons Systems,” *The Mark News*, 28 November 2014. <http://www.themarknews.com/2014/11/28/killer-robots/>

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## Annex II: Country Statements

13 November 2014

The following extracts are from statements made on 13 November 2014 at the Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties in either the general exchange of views or the special session on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). Most of the full statements are available online from Reaching Critical Will's [website](#).<sup>8</sup> A few were not available so the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has included its notes of remarks made, which should be checked with the source before republication as the notes do not represent a verbatim recording.

### Argentina

#### General Exchange of Views<sup>9</sup>

We consider that the possibility of using lethal autonomous weapons systems should be assessed with compliance with international instruments on humanitarian principles, bearing in mind the legal and humanitarian implications of their effective use. We consider that their use could become available in the future and should be restricted for ethical reasons, as well as probable failures in communications, changes in the attitudes of enemy forces, and many other reasons.

### Australia

#### [General Exchange of Views](#)<sup>10</sup>

Australia expresses satisfaction with the informal experts meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) that was held in May 2014. Australia supports further informal exploratory discussion on LAWS in 2015 under the CCW framework to allow States Parties to develop a more informed understanding on the possible technical, military utility, legal and humanitarian aspects associated with LAWS.

### Austria

#### [General Exchange of Views](#)<sup>11</sup>

Austria supports the questions raised by development of autonomous weapons to be treated with a sense of urgency in the relevant UN fora on the basis of a multidisciplinary approach. In this vein, we support an expert meeting in the framework of the CCW to be convened in 2015 as a step in progressing in our deliberations. As such, we are also in favor of documentation to be provided at the expert meeting, which we believe could further enhance the substantive quality of our discussions. A sufficiently broad mandate should allow the meeting to discuss the various aspects related to emerging technologies in the field of autonomous weapons systems, including legal, technical, ethical and societal aspects. The expert meeting should be inclusive in view of

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<sup>8</sup> Sweden and Turkey.

<sup>9</sup> Intervention of Australia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>10</sup> Statement of Australia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Australia.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Australia.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Statement of Austria, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Austria.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Austria.pdf)

the broad range of expertise available from states, international organizations and particularly civil society.

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>12</sup>

Austria was very pleased with the substantive nature, the multidisciplinary approach and the inclusive nature of the informal expert meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems in May this year. I congratulate the Chairperson of the expert meeting, Amb. Simon Michel of France, for his initiative and leadership.

This meeting has put a number of important questions and concerns on the table, including on the consequences of the availability of lethal autonomous weapons on international peace and security, the compliance with international law as well as philosophical and ethical questions. Austria considers it important to make progress on these issues and advance the discussions with a sense of urgency and therefore fully supports the convening of another expert meeting in the framework of the CCW in spring 2015. The expertise of civil society, academia and technical experts will render a valuable contribution to the.

For Austria, the deliberations in the CCW and the Human Rights Council during the past year have been important and complementary. They have demonstrated that there are clear boundaries that have to be respected deriving from international law and ethics. Weapons systems without meaningful human control are in contravention to international humanitarian law.

As an interim measure Austria has called on all currently engaged in the development of such weapon systems to freeze these programmes and those deliberating to start such development not to do so.

We expect from hopefully up to 5 days of discussions at an expert meeting next year further clarifications to be reflected in documents, on which we could build upon in the future.

## **Chile**

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>13</sup>

Lethal autonomous weapons systems could change the way that military force is used. We are becoming aware of the various aspects and so could negotiate possible standards. Consensus required as there is complexity because this is a new and emerging technology. The question is it better to regulate or to ban? There is an ethical imperative for ensuring meaningful human control with regard to decisions to use lethal force. What is the scope and implications of developing artificial intelligence to resemble decisions taken by human beings? The Martens Clause should be one of our guides. We're different from animals and machines. This shows that lethal force shouldn't be delegated to machines. Autonomous systems should not be given decision-making power to take human life. Such a move risks dehumanizing conflicts and Chile doesn't agree with this. We support the proposed 2015 meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

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<sup>12</sup> Statement of Austria, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Austria\\_LAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Austria_LAWS.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Intervention of Chile, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes taken by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

## China

### General Exchange of Views<sup>14</sup>

The issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems represents an issue with growing attention, which is very complicated. China highly appreciates the May experts meeting and welcomes the report by the French president. China supports further discussions on the issue in the framework of CCW to carry out in-depth study to look at definition, scope, legal application so as to deepen understanding and build consensus among the state parties.

## Colombia

### General Exchange of Views<sup>15</sup>

En relación con el estudio sobre Armas Letales Autónomas, mi delegación desea manifestar su apoyo a la celebración de nuevas reuniones en las que se profundice aún más en los aspectos técnicos, legales, militares y humanitarios de estas armas. En ausencia de una definición concluyente de este tipo de armas, conviene avanzar en la comprensión de los diferentes elementos que hacen parte del problema.

*Google Translate* - In connection with lethal autonomous weapons systems, my delegation wishes to express its support for further meetings in which deepened further in the technical, legal, military and humanitarian aspects of these weapons. In the absence of a conclusive definition of such weapons, should advance the understanding of the different elements that are part of the problem.

## Croatia

### General Exchange of Views<sup>16</sup>

In this time of global financial and economic uncertainty, many States Parties are finding it difficult to mobilize adequate resources to address a number of important issues. However, this should not stop us in our endeavors to ponder new and far-reaching instruments of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that could alleviate human casualties in the future. Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) are certainly such an issue on which we will reflect in more detail during today's afternoon plenary session.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>17</sup>

Croatia aligns itself with the EU statement made earlier. However, allow us a couple of national points on the topic of LAWS.

Croatia warmly welcomes the ongoing and direct engagement between States Parties and international organizations and institutions, as well as civil society and NGOs on the issue of

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<sup>14</sup> Intervention of Colombia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>15</sup> Statement of Colombia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Colombia.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Colombia.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Statement of Croatia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Croatia.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Croatia.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Statement of Croatia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_CroatiaLAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_CroatiaLAWS.pdf)

LAWS, and their joint determination to approach issues of priority in that regard. For one such priority, I will cite ICRC's paper on Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS): While there is recognition that humans must retain ultimate control, more detailed deliberation is needed about what constitutes adequate, meaningful, or appropriate human control over the use of force.

In our view, the Informal Meeting of Experts on the issue of LAWS held this May, ushered in a new era of hope for the international disarmament community. The continuation of talks on LAWS and its potential to eventually grow in a legally-binding instrument is an idea really close to our hearts. It is therefore our belief that this was truly a landmark year in which significant strides were made that could add immeasurably to the global security architecture.

Our presence at the May Meeting, as well as our support for the renewal of the mandate of another informal meeting of experts in 2015 (in the framework of the CCW) clearly indicates Croatian Government's political commitment to address LAWS in substance. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to cooperate with our partners, including organizations of civil society and experts from academia, concerning the future talks on LAWS. Moreover, we are ready to work assiduously with other States Parties to achieve the objective of proper regulation of these weapons.

Finally, let me conclude by recognizing the calls to ensure gender diversity in deliberations relating to disarmament, peace and security discussions by engaging and including non-male experts (which obviously applies to the LAWS issue as well).

## **Cuba**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>18</sup>

One of the topics most followed by the members of this Convention is that of autonomous weapons. In this regard, Cuba has serious doubts about the compliance and observance of the rules and principles of International Law with the use of lethal autonomous weapon systems. The use of this weaponry could not guarantee the distinction between civilians and combatants, or assessing the proportionality and precautions set by International Humanitarian Law as it could neither guarantee an effective assessment of the responsibility of States for illegal international acts, nor being accountable to violations of International Law.

Cuba believes we should work towards achieving a legally binding agreement under the framework of the United Nations and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons referring to the banning of autonomous weapon.

Without denying the importance of the freedom of scientific research, we emphasize the need to ban autonomous weapons before they began to be used. Now is the best time to address these concerns, as there is a collective opportunity to pause and proactively address the risks arising from the use of lethal autonomous robots.

The substantial human and financial resources devoted to the research and development of autonomous weapons cannot be overlooked. These resources should be used to the benefit of humanity and its struggle for the eradication of poverty and the achievement of a sustainable development. Due to the high cost of this modern technology only developed countries can afford it. With the use of autonomous lethal weapons, the asymmetry between rich and poor

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<sup>18</sup> Statement of Cuba, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Cuba.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Cuba.pdf)

countries would be increasingly marked. The tactical benefits arising from these of autonomous lethal weapons can help the NWS to stop considering the armed conflict as a last resort measure. This would increase in international conflicts and, hence, the victims.

Moreover, Cuba is concerned about the use of semi-autonomous military technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles, which cause a huge number of civilian casualties, so the use of drones should not be excluded from the analysis.

Another side of this topic is the fact that even when these weapons are used for peaceful and humanitarian purposes such as rescue operations, the recipient State must give its previous consent, so that under any circumstances, by their use, the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States will not be violated.

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>19</sup>

To repeat the definition which we consider can be used, Cuba sees one possible definition: lethal weapons which can kill on their own account without involvement of any human being in decision making process. Lethal robots are weapons which once activated select and attack targets without human intervention.

There is not specific international law on autonomous weapons, but we need to decide whether they should be prohibited under some or all circumstances. All new weapons must fulfill international humanitarian law requirements in its current form.

The use of these systems may be used for psychological warfare on weaker populations, which would be detrimental to those who don't have such capacity

There is difficulty in applying IHL. The idea is that distinguishing the civilian/combatant could be done by program, but how to tell hors de combat or whether a soldier is or whether a soldier is in the process of giving up?

Given that they are machines, they cannot be given responsibility for violation of IHL. Some maintain that robots can never meet requirements of IHL or HR and ability to decide who lives or dies, should not be allowed.

## **France**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>20</sup>

Mon pays se réjouit que notre Convention se soit saisie de la question émergente des systèmes d'armes létaux autonomes. La CCAC est l'enceinte pertinente pour traiter ce sujet. Elle dispose d'une expertise irremplaçable. Les discussions fructueuses que nous avons eues en mai dernier l'ont montré et il nous semble opportun que nos travaux sur ce sujet se poursuivent. Plusieurs options ont été présentées : 5 jours avec documentation nous paraît être une formule appropriée. J'y reviendrai spécifiquement lors du point prévu à l'ordre du jour sur ce thème.

*Google Translate* - My country is pleased that our Convention is to be referred to the emerging issue of systems autonomous lethal weapons. The CCW is the appropriate forum to address this issue. It has an irreplaceable expertise. The fruitful discussions we had last May have shown and

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<sup>19</sup> Intervention of Cuba, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>20</sup> Statement of France, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_France.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_France.pdf)

it seems appropriate that our work on this issue continues. Several options were presented: 5 days with documentation seems to be an appropriate formula. I will come back specifically at the intended point in the agenda on this topic.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>21</sup>

L'année dernière, les Etats-parties à la CCAC se sont accordés sur un mandat permettant la tenue d'une réunion informelle sur la question des systèmes d'armes létaux autonomes. Il s'agit d'un enjeu important pour l'avenir et d'un débat fondamental, car il pose la question de la place de l'Homme dans la décision d'engager la force létale. Les progrès rapides dans la robotique civile montrent à quel point ces discussions étaient opportunes. Pour autant, il s'agit de technologies duales et il est nécessaire de bien distinguer les applications civiles - qui sont utiles et ont un potentiel bénéfique - et les applications militaires, qui sont celles qui appellent une réflexion dans le cadre de notre convention.

Les débats qui se sont tenus en mai ont été riches et substantiels : ils ont démontré, s'il en était besoin, la pertinence de la CCAC pour se saisir de sujets émergents de manière transversale. La réunion a ainsi permis d'échanger sur les différents aspects des SALA : technique, juridique, éthique et opérationnel. Ils ont également permis d'entendre différents points de vue : ceux des délégations, mais aussi ceux des experts et ceux des représentants des organisations internationales et de la société civile.

La réunion a permis de faire le point sur des questions essentielles telles que l'état de la technologie et les progrès qui peuvent raisonnablement être envisagés à moyen terme ; les enjeux éthiques posés par le recours aux SALA, notamment l'impact sur la délégation de la décision d'engager la force létale ; le droit applicable à ces systèmes, leur capacité à mettre en œuvre le droit international, les questions de responsabilité et d'imputabilité, et enfin la pertinence de l'utilisation de ces systèmes dans un contexte opérationnel. Il s'agit de questions centrales sur lesquelles il est nécessaire de se pencher avant d'envisager une suite à nos travaux.

La réunion de mai a permis de commencer à dégager des pistes de convergence sur certains sujets. Les échanges lors de la session sur les aspects techniques ont permis d'esquisser les éléments à prendre en compte pour définir l'autonomie, notamment la capacité de sélectionner et d'engager une cible sans intervention humaine. La session sur les aspects juridiques a permis de réaffirmer l'importance centrale du respect du droit international humanitaire dans le développement de nouveaux systèmes. La session sur les aspects éthiques a mis en évidence l'impossibilité, en l'état actuel de la technologie, de l'acquisition par des machines de capacités de jugement moral et de raisonnement. Enfin, la session sur les aspects opérationnels a mis en évidence la nécessité d'une supervision des opérations. 14

- Cependant, de nombreux points restent encore à approfondir. Ma délégation estime notamment que plusieurs questions méritent d'être discutées plus précisément :

- Dans le domaine juridique, les questions liées à l'application et au respect du droit international, notamment le respect des principes de proportionnalité, distinction et précaution, et la question de la responsabilité et de l'imputabilité;

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<sup>21</sup> Statement of France, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_France\\_LAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_France_LAWS.pdf)

- Dans le domaine technique, il est nécessaire d'approfondir notre compréhension des travaux de recherche actuels et des avancées envisageables, afin d'évaluer l'impact potentiel des applications militaires de la robotique.

- Il nous semble enfin nécessaire de poursuivre notre évaluation de ce que recouvre la notion d'autonomie, afin de s'accorder sur les caractéristiques précises des systèmes dont nous discutons.

Compte-tenu de ces éléments, la France estime qu'il est prioritaire de s'accorder sur des bases communes solides avant de décider de la direction vers laquelle doivent tendre nos travaux.

Ma délégation réitère par ailleurs sa conviction selon laquelle la CCAC est le cadre approprié pour traiter de la question des systèmes d'armes létaux autonomes, dans la mesure où elle permet une évaluation transversale de ces systèmes et de leurs implications.

La France soutient donc l'organisation d'une nouvelle réunion informelle d'experts sur les SALA en 2015 sur 5 jours et avec documentation.

*Google Translate* - Last year, the States Parties to the CCW agreed on a mandate to hold an informal meeting on the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems. This is an important issue for the future and a fundamental debate because it raises the question of the place of man in the decision to lethal force. Rapid advances in civilian robotics show how these discussions were timely. However, it is dual technologies and it is necessary to distinguish between the civilian applications - that are useful and have a positive potential - and military applications, which are those that calling a reflection in part of our agreement.

The debates were held in May were rich and substantial: they demonstrated, if need be, the relevance of the CCW to seize emerging topics. The meeting enabled to discuss the various aspects of LAWS: technical, legal, ethical and operational. They also allowed to hear different points of view: those delegations, but also those of experts and representatives of international organizations and civil society.

The meeting provided an update on key issues such as the state of technology and the progress that can reasonably be considered in the medium term; the ethical issues raised by the use of LAWS, including the impact on the delegation of the decision to initiate deadly force; the law applicable to these systems, their capacity to implement international law, responsibility and accountability issues, and finally the appropriateness of the use of these systems in an operational context. These are central issues on which it is necessary to consider before considering a sequel to our work.

The May meeting has started to generate convergence runs on certain subjects. The exchanges during the session on technical aspects allowed to outline the factors to be considered when setting autonomy, including the ability to select and engage a target without human intervention. The session on the legal aspects has reaffirmed the central importance of respect for international humanitarian law in the development of new systems. The session on ethical aspects highlighted the inability of the current state of technology, the acquisition of moral judgment capacity machines and reasoning. Finally, the session on operational aspects highlighted the need for supervision of operations.

- However, many issues remain to be explored. My delegation believes that several such questions should be discussed more specifically:

- In the legal field, issues related to the implementation and enforcement of international law, including respect for the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution, and the question of responsibility and accountability;
- In the technical field, it is necessary to deepen our understanding of current research and possible progress to assess the potential impact of military applications of robotics.
- It seems we finally need to continue our assessment of what constitutes the notion of autonomy, in order to agree on the specific characteristics of the systems we are discussing.

Given these elements, France considers it a priority to agree on solid common basis before deciding which direction should aim our work.

My delegation also reiterates its belief that the CCW is the appropriate framework to deal with the question of self-lethal weapons systems, in that it allows a cross evaluation of these systems and their implications.

France therefore supports the organization of a new informal meeting of experts on LAWS in 2015 with 5 days and documentation.

## **Germany**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>22</sup>

The Convention's unique structure – a framework agreement that contains general provisions on the CCW operation and specific protocols that contain substantial prohibitions or restriction on the use of certain types of weapons – provides the High Contracting Parties with the possibility to respond in a flexible manner to new developments in the field of arms and defence technologies. It enables the High Contracting Parties to react to emerging challenges and to strive for a balance between military advantages and the protection of combatants and civilians from the worst effects of conventional weapons in armed conflicts.

Germany welcomes the continuation of a thorough and systematic international debate on lethal autonomous weapons systems. We regard the retention of human control over the decision about life and death as indispensable. International humanitarian law applies to new weapons systems, too. Its principles are not negotiable. This year's informal experts meeting has brought an impressive number of well-known experts on robotics, ethics and international law together. The meeting has shown the need and the interest to have further discussions on LAWS within the CCW. Therefore we deem it necessary to continue these in-depth discussions in another informal experts meeting next year, lasting preferably four days. We are ready to support the Coordinator on LAWS in this regard.

## **Holy See**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>23</sup>

First, I thank the French Presidency for the excellent work that has enabled the informal meeting of last May to conclude the work on the lethal autonomous weapons systems. It is a matter of great importance to my delegation and it is larger than the scope of the CCW where our primary

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<sup>22</sup> Statement of Germany, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Germany.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Germany.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Statement of Holy See, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_HolySee.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_HolySee.pdf)

interest is the development and respect for international humanitarian law. The automation of war and therefore the risk of its dehumanization should prompt States parties toward a deeper reflection and eventually to a decision to enact the indispensable measures that are necessary. A consideration merely from the military viewpoint would be artificially reductive. A global approach is indispensable: scientific, legal, cultural, economic, ethical, and humanitarian. The Holy See stated its position on this question at the informal meeting. I will not repeat it now. But I would like only to reaffirm our wish that the mandate regarding this topic be renewed taking into account the importance of preserving an official trace of the statements, documents, debates and discussions.

## **India**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>24</sup>

7. It is important for the international community to continue considering ways and means for progressive development of the rules of international law applicable to advanced conventional weapons which have devastating and indiscriminate effects. In this context, we support continued discussions on LAWs in 2015, on the basis of the mandate as agreed in the Meeting of State Parties in 2013. India participated in the Expert Level meeting in May this year under the commendable chairmanship of Ambassador Jean- Hughes Simon Michel of France. We feel that LAWs should be assessed not just from the view point of their compatibility with international law including international humanitarian law but also on their impact on international security if there is dissemination of such weapon systems. We would like the CCW process to emerge strengthened from these discussions, resulting in increased systemic controls on international armed conflicts embedded in international law in a manner that does not widen the technology gap amongst states or encourage the use of lethal force to settle international disputes just because it affords the prospects of lesser casualties to one side or that its use can be shielded from the dictates of public conscience, one of the key principles of International Humanitarian Law.

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>25</sup>

India supports continuation of discussions. They may inconclusive because the May meeting failed to discuss key terms, scope of deliberations, and even whether weapons systems of future or already being deployed. In 2014, the CCW barely touched the surface of definitions of key terms – whether these are weapons of the future, or weapons already being deployed as the New York Times article states.

The deliberations cannot be limited to international law or international humanitarian law. We must look at the impact of the weapons on national security. The coordinator's report reflects other views on the term "meaningful human control." We don't believe there is enough clarity on key concepts and that meaningful human control is a term that is used by itself or is adequate to establish relationship between autonomy and accountability.

A rush to judgment on meaningful human control would run risk of legitimizing weapons. We are not sure consensus about in CCW. Therefore endorsing notion of meaningful human control

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<sup>24</sup> Statement of India, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_India.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_India.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Statement of India, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

is premature and would not be in favor of changing the mandate to incorporate term, although not against discussing term in 2015.

Last year's mandate was good enough to encompass range of views—continue discussion. India has no problem with a five-day meeting. If change nature of coordinator report with reference to agreed outcome should be adopted by consensus.

## **Ireland**

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>26</sup>

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add some points in a national capacity.

The mandate of the CCW and its Protocols is to regulate or ban the use of specific categories of conventional weapons that have effects which trouble the conscience of humanity. The drafters of the 1977 Geneva Convention recognized that constant evolution and technological progress would require also a constant responsibility to ensure that new weapons, means and methods of warfare are not in violation of relevant international law, including international humanitarian law.

Ireland considers that the four day meeting of experts last May provided an important opportunity to explore the fundamental legal, ethical and societal issues raised by one such possible technological advancement – lethal autonomous weapons systems. We would like to thank France for its chairing of that group.

The debate on LAWS reaches far beyond legal and technical complexities, raising fundamental questions about the role of humans in taking lethal decisions in armed combat. The decisive question may very well be whether such weapons are acceptable under the principles of humanity and, if so, under what conditions. We consider the concept of meaningful human control to be essential in this regard and an area which requires further and deeper consideration.

We fully support the holding of a further meeting of experts in 2015 which will allow us to deepen our consideration of these significant questions. In light of the range and complexity of issues raised at our meeting earlier this year, it is our view that a five day meeting, with documentation, would be merited.

Ireland also has concerns regarding the potential use of LAWS in situations beyond the scope of the CCW mandate, including in law enforcement situations. It is for this reason that we also see value in discussing this question in other relevant fora, in particular in the Human Rights Council, as the issue of autonomy is one which has implications not only for International Humanitarian Law but also for International Human Rights Law.

Mr. Chair, As so ably demonstrated both at our meeting of experts last May but also throughout the life of our Convention and its Protocols, the contribution of civil society and academia to informing and assisting delegations is irreplaceable. Ireland supports a broad and inclusive participation and partnership with civil society in our work.

## **Israel**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Statement of Ireland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Ireland.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Ireland.pdf)

Israel welcomes the work undertaken this year in the CCW on the issue of future Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) by the informal meeting of experts. The CCW is an IHL-focused framework, which provides the appropriate forum to discuss an IHL issue such as Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (or LAWS) and their possible use during an armed conflict. Indeed, we believe that the issue of LAWS merits further study under this framework. My delegation will elaborate more on this topic in the designated section later today.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>28</sup>

At the outset we wish to thank the distinguished Ambassador Simon Michel for leading the successful Informal expert meeting, which took place last May and had a diverse and rich agenda.

The CCW is an IHL-focused framework, which provides the appropriate forum to discuss the various aspects of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) and their possible use during an armed conflict. There is no doubt that having a thorough discussion on means that do not yet exist, is a challenging task which requires an open mind and long-term vision, but at the same time, in order to have a serious discussion, requires us to be realistic and steer away from associations that originate from popular culture and science fiction movies.

In our view, a legal discussion on LAWS should be guided by two vital principles.

The first principle is maintaining an open mind regarding the positive capabilities of future LAWS. It is difficult to foresee today how these capabilities may look like in ten, twenty or fifty years from now. As a consequence, we believe that any responsible legal discussion of this issue, should be undertaken in a prudent and unpretentious fashion. It would be factually unfounded to argue today that autonomous systems could never reach certain positive capabilities, which would enable their use in accordance with IHL. Operating under this assumption has direct influence on any legal discussion on the matter.

The second principle is to acknowledge the complexities and nuances of such discussion. Future LAWS could take on a variety of forms, have a wide array of capabilities, and may be intended to operate in simple operational environments or more complicated operational environments. Consequently, a serious legal discussion on them cannot be summed up in sweeping, non-nuanced, clear-cut statements. To claim that LAWS will never, or will always, comply with the Laws of Armed Conflict, would be just too simplistic an approach. Each particular Lethal Autonomous Weapon System proposed, should be assessed on a case to case basis, bearing in mind its specific capabilities, along with the specific scenarios of use for which it is intended.

With these two principles in mind, we observe that the legal employment of a specific weapon system ought to depend on whether it can function within the scenarios of use for which it is intended, without violating the basic principles of the Laws of Armed Conflict, including the rules of proportionality, distinction and precaution. If the specific system under consideration is

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<sup>27</sup> Statement of Israel, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Israel.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Israel.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Statement of Israel, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_IsraelLAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_IsraelLAWS.pdf)

capable of operating in such a manner, its use should be considered legal, and the evaluation of its capability to do so should be assessed in each particular case.

In order to ensure the legal use of a lethal autonomous weapon system, the characteristics and capabilities of each system must be adapted to the complexity of its intended environment of use. Where deemed necessary, the warfare environment could be simplified for the system by, for example, limiting the system's operation to a specific territory, during a limited timeframe, against specific types of targets, to conduct specific kinds of tasks, or other such limitations which are all set by a human, or, for example, if necessary, it could be programmed to refrain from action, or require and wait for input from human decision-makers when the legality of a specific action is unclear. Indeed, human judgment exists all throughout the various phases of development, testing, review, approval, and decision to employ a weapon system, including an autonomous one.

The end goal would be for the system's capabilities to be adapted to the operational complexities that it is expected to encounter, in a manner ensuring compliance with the Laws of Armed Conflict. In this regard, LAWS are not different from many other weapon systems which do exist today, including weapons whose legal use is already regulated under the CCW.

In our view, there is even a good reason to believe that LAWS might ensure better compliance with the Laws of Armed Conflict in comparison to human soldiers. In many ways, LAWS could be more predictable than humans on the battlefield. Experience shows that whenever sophisticated and precise weapons have been employed on the battlefield, they have led to increased protection of both civilians and military forces. Thus, Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems may serve to uphold in an improved manner, the ideals of both military necessity and humanitarian concern – the two pillars upon which the Laws of Armed Conflict rest.

As mentioned earlier today, Israel welcomes the important work on LAWS undertaken earlier this year by the informal meeting of experts. As many other delegations, we also believe that the issue of LAWS merits further study under the CCW framework during 2015, in order to explore more thoroughly the various aspects relating to this issue.

## **Italy**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>29</sup>

The CCW has the merit to address the concerns posed by existing weapons, but also to prevent the development of new types of weapons that would have been unacceptable under the basic International Humanitarian Law principles. Against this backdrop, we highly appreciated the work done by the informal meeting of experts in May this year to discuss the issue of emerging technologies in the area of the Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWS) in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. In order to further enhance our common understanding of this important issue and its multiple technical, legal, ethical and military aspects, Italy strongly supports the renewal of the mandate of another meeting of experts in 2015.

## **Japan**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Statement of Italy, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Italy.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Italy.pdf)

Japan recognizes the growing interests in the international community regarding the issues of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS), and commends the leadership of Ambassador Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel of France at the informal Meeting of Experts on LAWS in May this year, which turned out to be very fruitful and insightful. With the participation of so many experts from various parts of the world, from states and civil society; the meeting deepened our understanding on this issue through lively exchange of views.

While appreciating that the Meeting of Experts contributed to developing common understandings of various aspects of LAWS, we sense that questions to be addressed still remain. Therefore, we support the continuation of a discussion on this issue in the CCW in order to identify future tasks about basic elements related to those weapons.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>31</sup>

We would like to once again commend the leadership of France at the informal meeting of experts on LAWS in May this year, which was very useful and informative. As expressed in our statement this morning, we support the continuation of a discussion on this important issue in the CCW in order to identify future tasks about basic elements related to those weapons.

We would like to make some general remarks on a couple of key issues related to LAWS, in which our government has special interest.

First, approach to the issue of LAWS. Japan is of the view that the issues related to LAWS should not be deliberated from one aspect or the other, considering that the issues require an in-depth and holistic approach from various perspectives including technical, legal, ethical and military aspects. From this point of view, we highly value the informal meeting of experts in May which dealt with various aspects of the issues, and we would like to suggest that this format of discussions should be maintained in the future discussions.

Second, the issue of a definition of LAWS. We believe that it is imperative to develop a common understating about what we perceive as LAWS in order to advance discussions, and recognize at the same time that it may be too early to engage in deliberation of the definition at this stage. Therefore, we would like to suggest that a clarification of LAWS should be made at a certain stage after substantial work is to be done.

Third, due consideration for peaceful use of robotics. If LAWS is considered as fully lethal autonomous weapon systems, which once activated, can effectively select and engage a target without human intervention, we understand that peaceful use of robotics lies outside the scope of LAWS. However, as pointed out at the informal meeting of experts in May, the technical components enabling autonomy are similar because of the dual-use nature of such technologies, and therefore, we would like to suggest that discussions on LAWS should be appropriately conducted while paying due consideration to peaceful use of autonomous technology in the civilian field, which is not only useful, but also contribute to a safe and sound life for us all.

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<sup>30</sup> Statement of Japan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Japan.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Japan.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Statement of Japan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_JapanLAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_JapanLAWS.pdf)

## Mexico

### General Exchange of Views<sup>32</sup>

Las nuevas modalidades de los conflictos armados contemporáneos y el desarrollo de tecnología aplicada a nuevos instrumentos de guerra deben ser discutidos con toda seriedad en este foro. Este es el caso de las Armas Letales Autónomas.

De igual forma, la problemática que representan las minas distintas a las minas antipersonal y los riesgos para la población civil y el personal de socorro de organizaciones humanitarias que operan en zonas infestadas de este tipo de artefactos de guerra debe ser discutida con seriedad.

*Google Translate* - The new forms of contemporary armed conflicts and the development of technology applied to new instruments of war should be discussed with all seriousness in this forum. This is the case of the Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

Similarly, the problems posed by mines other than anti-personnel mines and risks to civilians and relief workers of humanitarian organizations operating in areas infested with these engines of war should be discussed seriously.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>33</sup>

México desea reconocer y al mismo tiempo agradecer la celebración de la reunión informal de expertos de mayo de este año en la que se revisó el estado que guarda el desarrollo de las Armas Autónomas Letales (SALAS).

Como pudo verificarse en las discusiones, no existe un criterio homogéneo para la conceptualización de dicho armamento ni tampoco existe consenso en la manera de abordar este tema que reviste cierta complejidad. No obstante, existen marcos de referencia para esta discusión y es, sin duda alguna, el Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH) y los Derechos Humanos.

México es firme promotor de que las armas contrarias a los principios de DIH y que por sus características intrínsecas causan daños indiscriminados, superfluos e inhumanos deben ser prohibidas y eliminadas. Mi país está plenamente comprometido con el fortalecimiento del DIH, con la finalidad de hacer frente a nuevos retos. Sin embargo, hay principios universales para su implementación como lo es el objetivo medular de proteger al ser humano que no es partícipe en los conflictos armados.

Es fundamental que ante la necesidad de adecuar la normatividad internacional al desarrollo de las nuevas tecnologías en los armamentos, dicha adaptación debe contemplar tener como prioridad el respeto al derecho a la vida y la dignidad del individuo. México afirma que recae en el Estado la responsabilidad primordial de salvaguardar tales derechos inalienables del ser humano.

Así también se reconoce la aplicabilidad en este tema, de las leyes de la humanidad y las exigencias de la conciencia pública en los casos no previstos en los acuerdos internacionales, que señala la Cláusula Martens, que constituye una herramienta efectiva para abordar la cuestión de

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<sup>32</sup> Statement of Mexico, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Mexico.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Mexico.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Statement of Mexico, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Mexico.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Mexico.pdf)

la rápida evolución de la tecnología militar y que constituye derecho internacional consuetudinario.

De igual forma, la revisión legal del desarrollo de nuevas armas y particularmente la pendiente definición de “autonomía”, deben tener como base el Artículo 36 del Protocolo adicional I de los Convenios de Ginebra, que insta a los Estados a garantizar que el desarrollo de armamento cumpla con los parámetros del DIH, particularmente los principios de distinción, proporcionalidad y precaución, es un aspecto fundamental que los Estados deben observar estrictamente.

México apoya que continúe la discusión de este tema sobre esta plataforma legal internacional. Sin embargo, mi país considera que de seguir su análisis en el marco del grupo de trabajo informal, éste debe tener un mandato claro, que reciba insumos factuales, técnicos y científicos en la materia y, además, se cuente nuevamente con la participación constructiva de la sociedad civil, técnicos, académicos y expertos gubernamentales.

México aprovecha para manifestar su plena disposición para contribuir con la discusión de este tema.

*Google Translate* - Mexico wishes to acknowledge and thank while holding the informal meeting of experts in May this year in which the status of the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) was revised.

As we confirmed in discussions, there is no standard approach to the conceptualization of such weapons nor is there consensus on how to address this issue that is of some complexity. However, there are frameworks for this discussion and is, without doubt, the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights.

Mexico is strong promoter that contrary to the principles of IHL and its intrinsic characteristics cause indiscriminate damage unnecessary and inhumane weapons must be banned and removed. My country is fully committed to strengthening IHL, in order to cope with new challenges. However, there are universal principles for implementation as it is the core aim of protecting human who does not participate in armed conflict.

It is essential that the need to adapt to international standards to the development of new technologies in armaments, such adaptation must contemplate give priority to respect the right to life and dignity of the individual. Mexico asserts that the State bears the primary responsibility to safeguard such inalienable rights of man.

Thus the applicability in this topic, the laws of humanity and the dictates of public conscience in cases not provided for in international agreements, marking the Martens Clause, which is an effective tool to address the issue of it is also recognized rapid evolution of military technology and constituting customary international law.

Similarly, the legal review of the development of new weapons and particularly the slope definition of "autonomy" should be based on Article 36 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions, which urges States to ensure that the development of weaponry meets the parameters of international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, it is a fundamental aspect that States must strictly observe.

Mexico supported the continued discussion of this topic this international legal platform. However, my country believes that to continue its analysis under the informal working group, it must have a clear mandate, receive factual, technical and scientific inputs in the matter and,

furthermore, count again with the constructive involvement of civil society, technical, academic and government experts.

## **Netherlands**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>34</sup>

We align ourselves with the EU statement and would in addition like to make the following remarks. The Netherlands is strongly in favor of continuing our discussions on LAWS. We will therefore fully support a new mandate for an expert meeting on this topic to be able to continue our discussions within the framework of the CCW. For us, the content of the discussion is what matters. We prefer to meet 5 days.

The CCW expert meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in May this year proved to be an excellent first exchange of views on this new and important subject. Many thanks in that regard to Ambassador S. E. Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel of France. We find it very positive that this is a concerted effort by both states and civil society. From the discussions it is clear that there are many legal, ethical and policy questions regarding LAWS for which we are only beginning to find answers. These questions do not however exist only for LAWS, but also for enhanced autonomous functions of weapons systems in general.

International law and in particular International Humanitarian Law is the framework we look at with regard to the legality of weapons systems. While developing new weapon systems, both LAWS as well as weapon systems with more advanced autonomous functions in general, states should remain within the boundaries of international law. A particular issue that needs to be discussed further is what we exactly mean by ‘meaningful human control’ when we talk about weapon systems. Together with Switzerland, the Netherlands supported the second UNIDIR report on ‘Considering how Meaningful Human Control might move the discussion forward’. The report is the result of extensive discussions between experts. This report has been distributed in this room.

We intend to start a multiyear research program to develop our own national perspective on this issue. We should also deepen our understanding of the related ethical issues. Meaningful human control could be a very relevant subject of our CCW-meeting on topic in 2015.

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>35</sup>

A new mandate for an expert meeting is key to facilitate the continuation of our discussions on LAWS. As we stated in our statement this morning we fully support such a mandate.

In our view the content of this expert meeting should be aimed at achieving concrete results. In this regard we think it would be valuable to further explore the concept of “meaningful human control” in relation to the targeting process. The targeting process is a widely accepted model for decision making used by the military and very well documented in various handbooks and standards. We think such an approach would be a good starting point for further discussions.

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<sup>34</sup> Statement of Netherlands, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Netherlands.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Netherlands.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Statement of Netherlands, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_NetherlandsLAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_NetherlandsLAWS.pdf)

The NL will incorporate this approach in its own national research on 'Meaningful human control'. We intend to share the first results of this research with interested Member States at the CCW expert meeting.

## **Pakistan**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>36</sup>

Another destabilising development is the advent of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems or LAWS. The autonomous or independent target selection and use of lethal force by machines poses serious legal and moral questions and have implications for laws of war. In the absence of any human intervention, such weapons in fact fundamentally change the nature of war. LAWS would lower the threshold of going to war resulting in armed conflict no longer being a measure of last resort. Consequently, the resort to use of force may become a more frequent phenomenon.

LAWS are by nature unethical, because there is no longer a human in the loop and the power to make life and death decisions are delegated to machines which inherently lack compassion and intuition. This would make war inhumane.

LAWS cannot be programmed to comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), in particular with its cardinal rules of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. These rules can be complex and entail subjective decision-making, which requires human judgment.

LAWS would, therefore, undermine international peace and security. Their introduction would affect progress on disarmament and nonproliferation. Faced with the prospect of being overwhelmed by LAWS, states possessing WMD capabilities would be reluctant to give them up, while others would feel encouraged to acquire them.

Mr. Chairperson,

LAWS create an accountability vacuum and provide impunity to the user due to the inability to attribute responsibility for the harm they cause. If the nature of a weapon renders responsibility for its consequences impossible, its use should be considered unethical and unlawful. LAWS could easily be used in anonymous and clandestine operations as well as for targeted killing including in the territory of other states as is being witnessed in the use of armed drones. Like drones, civilians could be targeted and killed with LAWS through so-called signature strikes.

The breaches of State sovereignty in addition to breaches of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law associated with targeted killing programmes risk making the world and the protection of life less secure with LAWS in the equation.

The use of LAWS in the battlefield would amount to a situation of one-sided killing. Besides depriving the combatants of the targeted state the protection offered to them by the international law of armed conflict, LAWS would also risk the lives of civilians and non-combatants on both sides. The unavailability of a legitimate human target of the LAWS user State on the ground could lead to reprisals on its civilians including through terrorism as is being done in retaliation to drone strikes.

The states that are currently developing and using LAWS cannot afford to be complacent that such capabilities will not proliferate over time and hence they too shall become vulnerable. Going by past experience we all know that monopolies over such technologies do not last

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<sup>36</sup> Statement of Pakistan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Pakistan.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Pakistan.pdf)

forever. Since the developing countries are not going to carry the burden of nonproliferation, an unchecked robotic arms race could ensue. Besides, LAWS could also proliferate to non-state actors with unimaginable consequences. Like any other complex machine, LAWS can never be fully predictable or reliable. They could fail for a wide variety of reasons including human error, malfunctions, degraded communications, software failures, cyber attacks, jamming and spoofing, etc. There will always be a level of uncertainty about the way an autonomous weapon system will interact with the external environment.

Mr. Chairperson,

We should not let the blind quest for the ultimate weapon, driven by commercial interests of the military-industrial complex, get the better of us. The introduction of LAWS would be illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security with grave consequences. Therefore, their further development and use must be pre-emptively banned through a dedicated Protocol of the CCW. Pending the negotiations and conclusions of a legally binding Protocol, the states currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and use.

Pakistan notes the useful discussions that took place during the four day informal Meeting of Experts, from 13 to 16 May 2014, to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. We would like to thank Ambassador Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel of France for convening and chairing this meeting and look forward to discussing the issue of LAWS further under the auspices of the CCW. We, therefore, urge this meeting to further renew the mandate for discussing LAWS in 2015.

## **Palestine**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>37</sup>

The State of Palestine follows with great interest the work of this forum on Lethal autonomous weapons. Drones with Lethal autonomous munitions have been extensively used to target Palestinians. Furthermore, several control and observation towers around Gaza are equipped with automatic gun machines with lethal autonomous capabilities. Several Palestinian farmers were killed by those machines in the Buffer zone inside the Gaza strip.

## **Russia**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>38</sup>

Russian delegation took part in May in an informal workshop on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) and looked through the Chair's report on its results. We have to say that we have issues considering the expedience of continuing these discussions in the Convention framework. The efforts to take the course of discussing international legal regulation of using virtual technology that presently has no functioning models seem to be doubtful.

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<sup>37</sup> Statement of Palestine, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 14 November 2013. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Palestine.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Palestine.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Intervention of Russia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Russia.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Russia.pdf)

## **Lethal autonomous weapon systems**<sup>39</sup>

We have set out position on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in general discussion. We have greatest respect for opinions expressed on interesting and current issue. However, we fully recognize that large number issues remain undefined. This affects definition—what exactly LAWs are, scope—groups of issues connected to technology, sphere of application of weaponry.

We have doubts as to what could develop during our discussion. What standards are there and what standards could be formed because of our discussion. The further we go into discussions—even at the informal level—the greater the expectations will be from international community in terms of results. And in terms of results we have severe doubts.

We express doubts regarding the wisdom of continuing discussion of this topic.

## **Sierra Leone**

### **Lethal autonomous weapon systems**<sup>40</sup>

We need to continue the dialogue lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). Human rights aspects, including the right to life, dignity, security, and . . . should be prominent. There is satisfaction with the progress we have made on LAWS. The subject first brought up by the special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings at the Human Rights Council on which Sierra Leone is a member.

The CCW is competent body to bring together various issues. We'd like to see a hybrid forum so that human rights features in all disarmament efforts. The meeting in 2015 should pick up where the last meeting left off, and come to some kind of outcome. Definitions should be a part of this.

## **South Korea**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>41</sup>

On the matter of lethal autonomous weapon systems, the Republic of Korea supports the proposed mandate for meeting of experts in 2015 and look forward to further discussion on the implications of these weapons.

### **Lethal autonomous weapon systems**

The next meeting of experts should not just repeat what was done in past. We appreciate the work by the ISU to upload statements from the meeting to the website. We support holding a meeting of experts in 2015. The types of target that LAWS can attack and the context in which they can attack are important to consider.

## **South Africa**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Intervention of Russia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>40</sup> Intervention of Sierra Leone, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>41</sup> Intervention of South Korea, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

<sup>42</sup> Statement of South Africa, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_SouthAfrica.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_SouthAfrica.pdf)

My delegation participated in the informal meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and supports further discussion within the CCW on these emerging technologies.

Although we gained a greater insight into what we could expect there still many questions that remain unanswered. Since our discussions the question of autonomy has still not been answered and now the question of what is meaning human control?" has been raised. One of the key questions in this regard that should be of concern to all of us is whether these new technologies of warfare would be compliant with the rules of International Humanitarian Law, including those of distinction, proportionality and military necessity, as well as their potential impact on human rights. South Africa is therefore supportive of continued discussions.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank civil society for their tireless efforts in assisting to keep a spotlight on these issues so that the victims of these weapons are never forgotten.

## **Spain**

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>43</sup>

Me complace felicitarle por su nombramiento para ejercer la dirección de nuestros trabajos, esfuerzo en el que puede contar con todo el apoyo de mi delegación.

Quisiera, sumándome a los propósitos de la declaración de la Unión Europea con ocasión de esta reunión de Altas Partes Contratantes, señalar a título nacional algunas breves consideraciones en relación con el proceso de debate sobre los sistemas de armas autónomos letales, iniciado el pasado mes de mayo en esta capital con una reunión informal de expertos celebrada en el marco de la Convención de Ciertas Armas Convencionales bajo la excelente presidencia de Francia, cuyos esfuerzos agradecemos.

Mi delegación estima que, con dicha reunión de expertos, hemos iniciado un proceso de reflexión útil y necesario. Un proceso que, sin duda, va a exigirnos un estudio más pormenorizado sobre numerosos aspectos pendientes legales, técnicos, militares y humanitarios, que nos permitirá afrontar, con la debida coherencia, un complejo desafío en el ámbito del desarme, que sin duda va a experimentar un creciente protagonismo en el próximo futuro.

Compartimos la preocupación sobre el desarrollo de posibles armas que pudieran funcionar de forma autónoma proyectando una fuerza letal sin intervención humana, así como sobre las consecuencias que ello pueda implicar en el respeto de los derechos humanos y del derecho internacional humanitario.

Somos asimismo conscientes de la necesidad de prestar atención a este asunto desde una perspectiva de seguridad, para impedir una carrera de armamentos o su eventual adquisición por actores no estatales.

Uno de los principios básicos que se están considerando es el de la necesaria participación de un operador humano en este tipo de armas, pero permanecen todavía numerosos aspectos pendientes de clarificación, como el concepto mismo de sistema de arma autónomo letal y los distintos grados técnicos de automatismo a considerar en un posible futuro régimen de estos sistemas.

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<sup>43</sup> Statement of Spain, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_Spain.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_Spain.pdf)

Será necesario por tanto debatir las definiciones previas de estos conceptos con la necesaria justicia y precisión, para no menoscabar indebidamente, con pleno respeto al Derecho Internacional Humanitario, el ejercicio de legítima defensa en determinadas circunstancias.

Para profundizar en nuestros trabajos con la debida prudencia y conocimiento, hay que tener en cuenta además la circunstancia de que todavía este tipo de sistemas no se han desarrollado en la práctica. En atención a estas consideraciones, mi delegación desea expresar su apoyo a la iniciativa de la convocatoria en 2015 de una nueva reunión informal de expertos que nos permita continuar los debates que estamos iniciando sobre esta materia.

Muchas gracias.

*Google Translate* - I congratulate you on your appointment to exercise the direction of our work effort that you can count on the full support of my delegation.

I would, by joining the purposes of the statement of the European Union at this meeting of High Contracting Parties to draw national title a few brief remarks regarding the discussion process on systems of lethal autonomous weapons, which started last month May this capital with an informal meeting of experts held in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons under the excellent chairmanship of France, whose efforts we appreciate.

My delegation believes that, with the meeting of experts, have initiated a process useful and necessary reflection. A process that undoubtedly will require us a more detailed study on numerous outstanding legal, technical, military and humanitarian, allowing us to undertake with the consistency, a complex challenge in the field of disarmament, which will certainly experiencing an increasing role in the near future.

We share the concern about the possible development of weapons that could operate autonomously projecting a lethal force without human intervention, as well as the consequences that may involve respecting human rights and international humanitarian law.

We are also aware of the need to pay attention to this issue from a security perspective, to prevent an arms race or their possible acquisition by non-state actors.

One of the basic principles under consideration is the necessary involvement of a human operator such weapons, but still remain many outstanding aspects of clarification, as the concept of lethal autonomous weapon system and the various technical degrees operator to consider a possible future regime of these systems.

It will be necessary therefore to discuss previous definitions of these concepts with the necessary accuracy and fairness, not to impair unduly, with full respect for international humanitarian law, the exercise of self-defense in certain circumstances.

To deepen our work with caution and knowledge, we must also take into account the fact that such systems still have not been developed in practice. In view of these considerations, my delegation wishes to express its support for the initiative of the announcement in 2015 of a new informal meeting of experts allow us to continue the discussions that are starting on this subject.

## Sweden

### [General Exchange of Views](#)<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Statement of Sweden, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Swe.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Swe.pdf)

Sweden very much appreciated the opportunity at the expert meeting in May this year to take a first look at the questions around lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS. As a starting point, Sweden believes that humans should not delegate to machines the power to make life-and-death decisions on the battlefield. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we would therefore welcome also a continued discussion of this issue within the framework of CCW. Sweden fully supports the idea to convene in 2015 a second informal Meeting of Experts to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and look forward to High Contracting Parties taking such a decision during this meeting.

### **Lethal autonomous weapon systems**

Sweden supports further discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems in 2015.

### **Switzerland**

#### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>45</sup>

La CCAC est un instrument qui s'est révélé particulièrement important de par sa souplesse et sa capacité à permettre aux Etats d'aborder les défis posés par de nouvelles catégories d'armes ou existants de longue date.

Dans ce contexte, nous tenons à saluer le débat qui a été entamé sur les systèmes d'armes létales autonomes (SALA) dans le cadre de la Convention. Nous savons particulièrement gré à la France pour l'organisation, la tenue et le document de synthèse de cet événement. Les échanges que nous avons tenus ont mis en exergue toute une série d'éléments. Ils ont confirmé la pertinence de la thématique pour la CCAC et l'intérêt qu'y portent ses Hautes Parties contractantes, faits soulignés par la dynamique des débats et l'engagement actifs tant des délégations, de la société civile ou du monde académique.

Les échanges que nous avons tenus ont permis d'identifier certains éléments sous-jacents à la thématique, comme l'applicabilité du droit international et notamment du DIH à ces systèmes d'armes. De plus, ils ont permis de souligner la complexité du dossier. Si nous avons pu approfondir un certain nombre de ses facettes, que ce soit par rapport à ses aspects technologiques, militaires, juridiques ou éthiques, et il apparaît également clairement que beaucoup reste encore à faire. Les discussions ont par ailleurs permis d'identifier un certain nombre de pistes qu'il sera maintenant important d'explorer. Par exemple, la notion de contrôle humain effectif a reçu une attention certaine et pourrait contribuer à structurer la manière dont nous abordons la problématique. La question du mécanisme d'examen de la licéité des nouvelles armes, de nouveaux moyens ou nouvelles méthode de guerre représente un autre exemple de sujet à explorer plus avant.

Dans ce contexte, la poursuite des travaux de la CCAC concernant les SALA semble s'imposer d'elle-même. Le mandat adopté l'année dernière devrait par ailleurs prendre être renforcé afin d'accompagner l'évolution de nos travaux. Ceci s'applique en particulier à la durée de la réunion, à la possibilité d'instaurer une documentation officielle ou au rapport de l'événement. Enfin, un objectif central de nos efforts l'année prochaine devrait être de rapprocher les délégations dans le développement d'une compréhension commune de la thématique et dans une

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<sup>45</sup> Statement of Switzerland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_Switzerland.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_Switzerland.pdf)

évaluation partagée des défis à relever. Nous ne manquerons pas de revenir sur ce sujet et préciser nos vues en la matière lors de la plage qui lui est dédiée plus tard ce jour.

*Google Translate* – The CCW is an instrument that was particularly important to its flexibility and its ability to allow states to address the challenges posed by new categories of weapons and existing long.

In this context, we salute the debate has begun on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) within the framework of the Convention. We know particularly grateful to France for the organization and holding of this event summary document. The discussions we have held have highlighted a number of elements. They confirmed the relevance of the theme to the CCW and its interest in it are High Contracting Parties, facts highlighted by the dynamics of the debate and the active engagement of both delegations, civil society and academia.

The discussions we have held have identified some underlying elements to the theme, such as the applicability of international law, including IHL these weapons systems. In addition, they have highlighted the complexity of the case. If we were able to explore a number of facets, be it in relation to its technological, military, legal, ethical, and it also appears clear that much remains to be done. The discussions also identified a number of tracks that will now be important to explore. For example, the actual human control concept has received some attention and could help structure the way we approach the problem. The question of the review of the legality of new weapons mechanism, new ways and new method of warfare is another example of a topic to explore further.

In this context, the continuing work of the CCW for LAWS seems to impose itself. The mandate adopted last year should also take to be strengthened in order to support the development of our work. This applies in particular to the duration of the meeting, the possibility of establishing formal documentation or report the event. Finally, a central objective of our efforts next year should be to bring the delegations in developing a common understanding of the theme and in a shared assessment of challenges. We will certainly return to this issue and to clarify our views on the matter at the session dedicated to this later today.

### Lethal autonomous weapons systems<sup>46</sup>

At the outset, let me convey, through you, our thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Jean Hugues Simon-Michel of France, for steering the first CCW Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) in May this year and for presenting his report this afternoon.

While the discussions helped clarify and deepen certain issues, they also underlined the complexity of the topic as well as the uncertainty of technological developments. Accordingly, the pursuance of our work seems self-evident. As we proceed in our work, the mandate and the parameters of the meeting should be adapted in order to enable us to address the complexity of the issue.

Therefore, my delegation fully supports the option of evolving the mandate by extending the discussion to five days and to ensure documentation of our work. This would allow for a deepening of our discussions and, more importantly, for keeping track of our work. We would

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<sup>46</sup> Statement of Switzerland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_SwitzerlandLAWS.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_SwitzerlandLAWS.pdf)

also suggest reflecting whether the nature of the report of the meeting of experts could be slightly evolved in order to include recommendations for future work. As for the working methods, arrangements with sub-groups addressing specific issues rather than solely working in plenary could be worth exploring. Future discussions could also benefit from a greater range of experts participating in possible panel discussions.

The goal of next year's work must be to bring us closer to a common understanding of the subject matter and to a shared assessment of the challenges that come with it. It seems essential to create clarity about what an autonomous weapons system is and which specific characteristics or critical functions raise concerns. In addition, it is important to get a better understanding of the technological state of the art. While some trends towards autonomy have already materialised, we recognise that key concerns relate to future developments, hence adding an additional layer of uncertainty to our discussions.

In this context we should continue discussions next year on what has the potential to unite us. The meeting in May revealed, for instance, a considerable convergence among participants that the development of weapons systems which in their search, identification, target acquisition and engagement are free from any meaningful human control, would cause considerable concern. There was no doubt among the participants that their development and use in armed conflict is governed by international law and notably international humanitarian law (IHL), including the requirement to carry out legal reviews of new weapons. Finally, we concur with the opinion expressed by military experts that LAWS are not a generally favored weapons system since commanders actually seek more rather than less control over the battlefield.

Based on these assumptions we believe it would be helpful to consider in more detail the concept of meaningful human control to frame our discussion since it helps to "un-pack" some of the crucial questions. By doing so it allows us to think more systematically about the challenges we are facing in the technological, legal, ethical and military fields. In this context we also welcome the second UNIDIR paper that examines this concept and provides a good basis for our discussions. As mentioned this morning we also see merit in discussing aspects related to the application of legal reviews of new weapons, means and methods of warfare in relation to LAWS. Such legal reviews are crucial for ensuring that these systems are in compliance with international law.

Mr. Chairman,

The fact that we are dealing with an emerging issue, and that many systems that would cause concerns have not yet been developed, should not prevent us from having a genuine discussion about LAWS. The uncertainty, however, calls for considerate steps, which are evidence- rather than emotion-based, and that lead to the consideration of practical steps related to this topic.

I thank you and am looking forward to future deliberations.

## **Turkey**

### **General Exchange of Views**

Turkey welcomes the discussions held on lethal fully autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and believes the CCW should renew mandate to enhance u/s of complex issue. Turkey prefers another informal meeting to enhance understanding of this complex and multivariate topic.

Turkey welcomes NGOs but can't threaten security. Sustainable solution couldn't be agreed to. Hopefully high contracting parties will not have to resume such consultations in future.

## United Kingdom

### General Exchange of Views<sup>47</sup>

This leads to the topic of Autonomous Weapons Systems. On this topic, please allow me to express the gratitude of the United Kingdom to the Republic of France for the excellent work they have done in facilitating our discussions on Autonomous Weapons Systems so far. The report France has produced is a clear and helpful summary of the discussions that we held in May of this year.

4. As the discussions showed, autonomous weapons systems are an important issue, and it is right that we have been giving the matter our serious attention. The discussions we held in May of this year demonstrated that this issue falls within the remit of the CCW, as what we are discussing is conventional weapons use. We also note that we are not speaking here about existing weapons systems.

5. We are mindful also of the applicability of International Humanitarian Law to the assessment and use of all weapons systems. This includes a Legal Weapons Review process before the adoption of any weapons system, as directed by Article 36 of Additional Protocol I. We would encourage all states to engage in a Legal Weapons Review process before adopting any weapons system for use by their armed forces. IHL also regulates the use of any weapon in armed conflict. Mr President,

6. The United Kingdom supports a continuation of the CCW's mandate for discussion of LAWS next year at the same level of Informal Meetings of Experts. Should the mandate be agreed, we look forward to contributing to those discussions, as well as to the rest of the work of the CCW.

## United States

### General Exchange of Views<sup>48</sup>

As we look ahead at decisions we will take with respect to next year's work, the United States believes there is value in continuing our discussions on lethal fully autonomous weapons systems in the CCW. We were pleased with the level of participation in the informal meeting of experts in May of this year, which provided an opportunity for us to further identify and discuss the legal, technical, military, and ethical issues raised by this complex subject. It is clear that this discussion is just beginning and further work is required to help shape our understanding of this future technology. The United States believes that that it is important to continue our informal discussions in 2015 that should include no less than 5 days of discussion.

While it is premature to decide where these discussions might or should ultimately lead, it is important that our work move forward and build upon what was accomplished last May. We need to have an in depth discussion of the variety of issues surrounding LAWS. The United States believes that one important area that deserves increased attention next year is how states evaluate new weapons systems such as LAWS. We believe that focusing, in part, on the weapons review process could provide the basis to identify fundamental issues and provide guidance for states that are considering any new weapons system. We believe such a discussion could result in

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<sup>47</sup> Statement of UK, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_UK.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_UK.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Statement of US, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. <http://geneva.usmission.gov/2014/11/13/u-s-statement-at-the-meeting-of-high-contracting-parties-to-the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons-ccw/>

a set of best practices applicable to the future development of lethal autonomous weapons systems. With the possibility that this could be a consensual outcome document in time for the 2016 Review Conference, the United States could support additional time for discussion on this specific topic in 2015. We believe this would be a positive first step for CCW High Contracting Parties to take while continuing to refine the legal, technical, military, and ethical issues surrounding these complex future weapons systems.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, the United States looks forward to continuing and refining the substantive informative expert discussions we had in 2014 on LAWS and continuing our consideration of MOTAPM.

## **European Union**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>49</sup>

We welcome the informal discussions held from 13 to 16 May 2014, which allowed us to have four days of substantive discussion on the issue of emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems (LAWS). We thank France for leading this productive meeting. It has provided an important opportunity to exchange preliminary views and explore fundamental technical, legal, ethical and societal, operational and military aspects in this area and helped to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue. Important questions, though, still remain. We are looking forward to the discussion of this important issue this afternoon and we support the renewal of the mandate of another informal Meeting of Experts in 2015 in the framework of the CCW, in order to continue the debate and further enhance our common understandings.

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**<sup>50</sup>

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We welcome the informal discussions held from 13 to 16 May 2014, which allowed us to have four days of substantive discussion on the issue of emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems (LAWS). We would like to thank France for leading this productive meeting. It has provided an important opportunity to exchange preliminary views and explore fundamental technical, legal, ethical and societal, operational and military aspects in this area and helped to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue. Important questions, though, still remain. We would therefore like to offer our support for the renewal of the mandate of another informal Meeting of Experts in 2015 in the framework of the CCW, in order to continue the debate and further enhance our common understandings.

## **United Nations**

United Nations Secretary-General

UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action

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<sup>49</sup> Statement of the EU and its member states, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov\\_EUgeneral.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/MSP/statements/13Nov_EUgeneral.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Statement of the EU and its member states, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_EU.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_EU.pdf)

## **UN Institute for Disarmament Research**

### **General Exchange of Views**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you about research underway at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) that pertains to your discussion on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems and that we hope will add value to your work.

#### The Project

In 2013 the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters recommended that the Secretary-General consider commissioning a comprehensive analysis on increasingly autonomous weapons technology. He suggested UNIDIR be tasked to carry out such a study, which would cover the development, proliferation and use of this technology.

Member States have yet to decide whether to commission such a study. However, in the interim UNIDIR has begun to carry out an 18-month project on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies with the support of the governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland.

This project is part of UNIDIR's Research Programme on "Security and Society".

UNIDIR's project is focused on advancing multilateral discussion in this domain. For example, it seeks to explore some of the areas of concern, and learn from approaches from other domains that may be of relevance. It does not offer specific policy recommendations. Instead, the project's primary aim is to help policy-makers to better consider and make informed decisions about autonomy in weapon systems.

#### Turning to the outcomes of the project

This year, UNIDIR has focused on four aspects related to autonomy—ways to frame discussions, the concept of "meaningful human control", maritime autonomy, and ethical challenges.

On the first aspect, UNIDIR released a short paper at the end of April entitled "Framing discussions on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies." The paper makes four observations for policy makers to think about as they approach talks in multilateral fora such as the CCW and the Human Rights Council, as well in their national policy dialogues.

Second, the phrase "meaningful human control" has been taken up by civil society and some states as a useful framing concept for discussions on autonomy in weapon systems. We saw this most clearly at the May 2014 CCW Meeting of Experts, with some noting then that the concept needed further development and study. Other potential frames for thinking about the issues were also raised at that meeting, like those focused on predictability or human intent

In response, UNIDIR has sought to further explore the concept of meaningful human control. For example, on 16 October, on the margins of First Committee, UNIDIR held a well-attended side event entitled "Weapons, Technology and Human Control". One new element this side event introduced was that there are safety issues related to ensuring meaningful human control in autonomous systems. These issues go beyond strict questions of intentional targeting and attack, especially in highly complex, tightly coupled technological systems that are prone to catastrophic failure. For those of you who were not with us on 16 October, you can hear the thought-provoking talks on our website ([www.unidir.org](http://www.unidir.org)).

Today we are releasing a second paper, "The Weaponization of Increasingly Autonomous Technologies: Considering how Meaningful Human Control might move the discussion forward". I won't attempt to summarise this fascinating and up-to-the-minute paper here. Instead, I recommend to you all that you read it as an aid to your work. Copies are available at

the back of this conference chamber, or can be downloaded from the UNIDIR's website, ([www.unidir.org](http://www.unidir.org)).

Third, this year we have considered maritime autonomy. Experts have suggested that fully autonomous weapon systems are likely to first appear in the relatively "uncluttered" maritime environment. Yet, policy-makers do not yet appear to have focused much on the specific issues and challenges that will arise. The rules covering armed conflict at sea are less elaborate than those for land warfare. While basic rules of international humanitarian law apply—namely those of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack—there is little treaty law addressing the challenges of doing so at sea. Two existing categories of marine objects in maritime law that might be relevant to discussions of increasing marine autonomy are vessels and weapons. Just as Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns has warned that the weaponization of increasingly autonomous systems might one day blur the distinction between weapon and soldier, increasingly autonomous marine systems blur the line between these two distinct categories.

Later this month UNIDIR will release a third observation paper that aims to shed light on these and other issues related to the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies in the maritime environment.

Finally, considering ethical dimensions in the autonomy discourse is crucial. Yet we've observed that the matter of ethics is often presented as a prelude to supposedly more substantive legal discussion.

So our work this year will conclude with a paper examining ethical issues that the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies raises.

Mr Chairman, distinguished colleagues,

UNIDIR stands ready to continue to assist Member States as you move forward in your discussions on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies in this forum as in others. Funding permitting, UNIDIR intends to continue its work in this regard through 2015. If your government is interested in supporting UNIDIR's programme of work on this topic, I'd be happy to discuss areas for collaboration with you.

## **International Committee of the Red Cross**

### **General Exchange of Views**<sup>51</sup>

The discussions on autonomous weapons systems have demonstrated the important role that the Convention can play to address humanitarian concerns raised by new technologies of warfare. The ICRC welcomes the attention given to these systems by CCW States Parties, notably through their meeting of experts held in May. This meeting, together with those convened by the ICRC and UNIDIR in March, among others during the year, have helped to gain a better understanding of the legal, ethical, technical and operational issues that arise in relation to such systems. The full report of the ICRC's own Expert Meeting on Autonomous Weapon Systems has now been published.

The ICRC believes that autonomous weapon systems warrant continued attention and we urge States Parties to extend the CCW discussion mandate into 2015. In our view, the next phase of work should focus on how autonomy in weapon systems is developing, particularly with respect

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<sup>51</sup> Statement of ICRC, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014. [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov\\_ICRC.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2014/statements/13Nov_ICRC.pdf)

to the ‘critical functions’ of searching for, identifying, selecting and attacking targets. Discussions should focus on current or foreseeable weapon systems that are pushing the boundaries of human control over the critical functions of the weapons, and the legal and ethical issues involved, and avoid scenarios that are currently unrealistic.

The ICRC also believes that future CCW discussions on autonomous weapon systems should explore the notion of meaningful or appropriate levels of human control or judgement in relation to autonomous weapons systems. While there appears to be recognition that humans must retain ultimate control over any weapon system, more detailed deliberation is needed about what constitutes adequate, meaningful, or appropriate human control over the use of force. The CCW should provide a valuable forum to better understand this concept from a legal, technical and operational, as well as an ethical, perspective, and to help delineate where the boundaries lie.

In respect of any new weapon system – including existing weapons that are modified to increase autonomy in their critical functions – the ICRC recalls the crucial importance of carrying out legal reviews to ensure that the weapons can be used in accordance with international humanitarian law. CCW Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences have in the past recalled the importance of legal reviews of new weapons, which are a legal requirement for States party to Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. In the context of forthcoming discussions on autonomous weapon systems, the ICRC strongly encourages States Parties to share, to the extent possible, their experience of legal reviews of weapons fitted with autonomous functions that are being studied, developed or acquired. This would significantly enrich the debates about autonomous weapon systems.

## **Article 36**

### **General Exchange of Views**

We are encouraged by the discussions on autonomous weapons over the past 12 months since the CCW took up this theme and we look forward to these discussions continuing and intensifying in 2015 with a view to developing new international rules. In our view, an acknowledgment by states of a broad requirement for meaningful human control over individual attacks is the right place to start. This should constitute the common ground for the next steps in the international deliberations on this theme.

Weapons that detect and engage targets challenge the concept of meaningful human control. We hope that states will come prepared next year with concrete examples of how they manage weapons systems that detect and engage targets to ensure that individual attacks are always under meaningful human control. In our view, this material will helpfully inform a discussion of the sorts of specific controls – and new international rules – that will be needed to prevent the development of fully autonomous weapons.

We also welcome the significant growing interest this year in the need for weapons reviews. In our view, states should draw on their experiences from other areas, such as public health, in terms of how best to assess developing technologies. We believe that focused discussions about how such processes can be strengthened and universalised would be very valuable in the context of the CCW, or on the margins. At the same time, we would not be convinced by suggestions that national weapon review mechanisms constitute a sufficient response to concerns regarding the development of autonomous weapons systems. Given that there is currently no agreement regarding the level and nature of human control required, leaving it up to national reviews on a case by case basis would likely result in widely divergent standards especially given deficits of

transparency. This is in line with our recommendation that states should explain their controls over existing weapon systems. Discussions should not be limited to ‘virtual technology’.

## **Human Rights Watch**

### **General Exchange of Views**

In the mid-1990s, CCW States Parties negotiated new protocols on blinding lasers and landmines at the same time. From 2000 to 2003 they in essence simultaneously carried out negotiations on explosive remnants of war and antivehicle mines. It is time for States Parties to again engage in two-track negotiations, on lethal autonomous weapons systems and on incendiary weapons.

Looking first at lethal autonomous weapons systems – Human Rights Watch is one of the founders of and is now the global coordinator of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. The Campaign calls for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapon systems, those that would be able to select targets and fire on them without meaningful human control. We believe that a ban is required because of the multitude of moral, ethical, legal, technical, proliferation, and other concerns raised by the weapons. A ban is the only viable solution. Some today have pointed toward a “best practices” approach, but the best practice is no acquisition and no use.

There should be a sense of urgency in moving forward on this issue, as technology races forward. Many of you may have seen the long, front page story in the New York Times yesterday highlighting the US’s Long Range Anti Ship Missile, the UK’s Brimstone missile, and swarm weapons more generally as examples of how far and how fast the technology is moving.

As the technology barrels ahead, CCW delegates are debating whether to discuss the issue for four or for five days next year, and whether to have documentation. It is difficult to make the case that eight or nine days of informal talks over a two year period constitutes serious consideration of the matter.

Members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots literally cheered last November when CCW States Parties agreed to the initial mandate to work on lethal autonomous weapon systems. We hailed the May 2014 Meeting of Experts as a great success. And we are pleased that it appears another mandate will be agreed to this week for work next year. We very much appreciate that so many nations today have stressed the importance of this issue and the need to address it.

But the mandate before you now is a big disappointment. Delegates should not be debating four vs. five days of work, but rather two weeks vs. three weeks. Documentation should be a given if states are serious about a sustained process, with a concrete outcome, rather than just a couple talk shops on the issue.

The mandate shows no real forward movement, no deepening of the work. There is a striking disconnect between states repeatedly saying how complicated this issue is, and how many questions remain unanswered, but then not dedicating adequate time to address them.

Our hope is that the week of talks in 2015 will set the stage for much more extensive and intensive formal discussions in 2016. We hope the 2015 talks will further solidify the emerging consensus that there should always be meaningful human control over targeting and kill decisions. States Parties should be planning for three to four weeks of work in 2016, in the lead-up to the Review Conference, where a negotiating mandate should be agreed. Throughout the entire history of the CCW, the only time progress has been made on an issue has been when States Parties devoted at least three to four weeks in a year to it.

Outside the CCW, it will still be useful to address lethal autonomous weapons in the Human Rights Council, as the potential development of these weapons systems is relevant to domestic

law enforcement and human rights law, as well as situations of armed conflict and the applicability of international humanitarian law.

And it is essential that states move forward with the development of national policies on lethal autonomous weapons. The lack of national policies is a sharp brake on international progress on this issue.

## **ICRAC**

### **Lethal autonomous weapons systems**

I am speaking on behalf of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (or ICRAC as we are known). We are a founding member of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

We are delighted that the international community represented here has begun the discussions about autonomous weapons systems. And we were very pleased with the informal meeting of experts convened at the CCW last May and would like to thank the Ambassador Simon-Michel for that initiative.

But we do not want the discussions to end here. We urge allstate parties to develop their own national policies and come back here for more detailed discussions about how to proceed. And if you come back and say, “we have automated weapons but there will always be a human in the control loop or that appropriate judgement will be used”, We want to know exactly what that means.

It is time to flesh out the detail now. We would like states to consider whether their existing policy statements are sufficiently clear to be recognized by others as constituting meaningful human control. Are they sure that there will be a chance for human deliberation before applying violent force?

We would like to reiterate some of our concerns here.

ICRAC has grave concerns about crossing a fundamental moral line by allowing the delegation of kill decisions to machines.

We have grave concerns about the limitations of the technology of autonomous weapons to comply with International Law.

We have grave concerns about the inherent unpredictability of autonomous weapons and the implications that this raises for effective reviews of these weapons systems.

There has often been a danger that one nation imagines gaining great advantages from new technological developments in the belief that other nation’s weapons systems will remain stationary. But this is a mistake and it is not what happens. So ICRAC has grave concerns about the proliferation of autonomous weapons systems, the potential for a new arms race and the requirement for ever faster response times beyond human capability. This will not foster greater world security or stability.

We have grave concerns about how large numbers of autonomous weapons systems with secret combat algorithms will interact and perhaps trigger unintended conflicts.

In the light of these concerns ICRAC urges states parties to the CCW to move forward in its deliberations. We all still have a lot to learn from each other. It is not going to be an easy road to work out which types of weapons have acceptable levels of human control and which do not. But surely this is what the CCW is here for. And, in keeping with past practice, this would best be achieved by a group of governmental experts.

You have a decision to make now that will shape the future development of the technologies of conflict. Please do not make a move that will ultimately result in the full automation of warfare. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons can and must make a difference to our collective future. Please let us move forward with substantive discussions aimed at new international rules for the benefit of humanity; rules that stop us taking a step into a world where computer programs take the use of violent force from the hands of humans.

## **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots**

### **[Lethal autonomous weapons systems](#)**

Our Campaign to Stop Killer Robots was pleased to be able to participate in the first meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems earlier this year. We would like to acknowledge the excellent work by Ambassador Simon-Michel of France and his team in organizing this historic meeting.

Our campaign is continuing to grow and expand, with the additions this year of more than 20 Nobel Peace laureates endorsing our call for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons. Scientists continue to come on board our movement and this year a Canadian robotics company became the first worldwide to endorse the call when it pledged not to participate in the development of fully autonomous weapons.

Today you received a call to action from more than 70 faith leaders of various denominations demanding action and endorsing our call for a ban. We're seeing increased debate on the matter by academic institutions and think tanks. This issue continues to seize public interest and attract media attention.

So it should come as no surprise that our global coalition fully supports the renewal of the mandate to continue deliberations in 2015. We are seeing broad consensus expressed for continuing the talks. It should be clear by now that "doing nothing" in the face of ever-greater autonomy in warfare is not an option.

We would like to make three points on the possible talks next year on both substance and process.

First, we hope that the deliberations are not a repeat of this year's experts meeting and that they dig deeper. You have heard a number of suggestions from our member NGOs in their statements today as well as in our side event briefing. An exploration of the principle of meaningful human control is at the top of our list of suggestions, as this approach can be seen as linking technical issues with human responsibilities, and moral considerations. We have many more ideas that we would be glad to discuss with you.

Second, states should come to the next expert meeting ready to share national experiences of current weapons systems that detect and engage targets. These weapons challenge the notion of meaningful human control, and discussion on these systems can help inform us of the sorts of controls that are needed.

Third, on process, we appreciate all the expressions of support for the substantive contributions that civil society is making in the context of the Convention on Conventional Weapons. We urge that further deliberations on autonomous weapons be not just inclusive of non-governmental organizations, but also diverse in hearing the voices of men and women, of various views, and of all nations.

Finally, while we are hopeful of a successful outcome here in agreeing to the 2015 meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems we cannot help but wish the mandate was more ambitious in terms of the time allocated and level of formality dedicated to this work.

We stand ready to contribute substantively to your efforts next year.

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