



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS



Report on Activities

Convention on Conventional Weapons Annual Meeting of High Contracting Parties
United Nations Geneva
12-13 November 2015

About this report

This report covers activities by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots at the annual meeting of high contracting parties to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) held at the United Nations in Geneva on 12-13 November 2015, including outreach in the period leading up. The report reviews government statements and interventions and assesses the decision to continue the CCW process on lethal autonomous weapons systems by holding a third meeting on the matter at the CCW on 11-15 April 2016.

Campaign coordinator Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch prepared this report drawing on statements posted online by WILPF's [Reaching Critical Will Project](#) and the [United Nations](#). The country summaries are also drawn from notes taken by Bonnie Docherty of Human Rights Watch and her students at Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic: Sarah Abraham and Federica du Pasquier.

For more information, please see the campaign's website: www.stopkillerrobots.org

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Overview

1. Agreement on the 2016 mandate

The decision taken by states at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) to continue their process of deliberations on killer robots is contained in Paragraph 35 of the final report of the CCW annual meeting adopted late in the afternoon on 13 November 2015:

The Meeting decided to convene an informal meeting of experts of up to five days during the week of 11 to 15 April 2015 to discuss further the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. The Chairperson of the meeting of experts will submit a report in his personal capacity to the 2016 Fifth Review Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Convention. The meeting of experts may agree by consensus on recommendations for further work for consideration by the 2016 Fifth Review Conference.¹

States accepted Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany to serve as chair of the April 2016 meeting after he chaired the second CCW meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems on 13-17 April 2015. France's Ambassador Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel chaired the first CCW meeting on the matter on 13-16 May 2014 after he led a successful effort in November 2013 to begin the CCW talks.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has welcomed the CCW's positive decision to continue deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2016, but it has criticized states for their lack of ambition in not dedicating more time to more substantive deliberations.

The one new aspect in the mandate is its last sentence that states the April 2016 meeting "may agree by consensus on recommendations for further work for consideration by the CCW's 2016 Fifth Review Conference."² This is a noteworthy improvement on the previous mandates as it implies that countries are willing to work toward an outcome rather than simply discuss questions raised. It is a strong indicator that the CCW's deliberations on killer robots will continue after the five-year Review Conference is held on 12-16 December 2016.

Sri Lanka's Ambassador Ravinatha P. Aryasinha chaired the CCW's 2015 meeting of high contracting parties, which opened with an address by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

¹ See draft Final Report of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties available at: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/DraftReport.pdf> and final decisions: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/AddParagraphs.pdf>

² The original CCW mandate on killer robots agreed in November 2013 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>

encouraging structured deliberations in 2016, delivered by Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva.

All but three of the 42 states that spoke during the general exchange of views on the first day of the CCW's annual meeting on 12 November expressed explicit support for further deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems and several called for a Group of Governmental Experts.³

An session to consider what the CCW should address with respect to lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2016 took almost the whole morning on the final day of the CCW meeting on 13 November. Following a presentation by Germany's Ambassador Biontino of his 23-page [report](#) on the April 2015 meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, 24 states shared their views in addition to the ICRC and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and its member Article 36.⁴

During the lunch break, representatives from more than three-dozen states participated in an informal consultation convened by the Sri Lankan president to further discuss the proposed 2016 mandate on autonomous weapons. Regrettably, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots representatives were asked to leave the consultation after the United Kingdom objected to their presence.

That afternoon, the killer robots mandate was adopted by consensus in the final report of the meeting, which confirmed Pakistan's disarmament representative Ambassador Ms. Tehmina Janjua as president-designate of the Fifth Review Conference and set 31 August–2 September 2016 for a preparatory meeting on the Review Conference.

2. Lead-up to the 2015 annual meeting

After the April 2015 CCW meeting on killer robots concluded, Ambassador Aryasinha conducted consultations with states and regional groups, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN, and Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. He then convened a meeting at the UN in Geneva on 17 September 2015 to explain his findings. According to the ambassador, some delegations wanted to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider the topic in 2016, but he found "insufficient common ground" to hold anything more ambitious than another week-long informal experts meeting next year. During the meeting, China and the US expressed their preference for another informal meeting.

In October 2015, for the third year in a row, killer robots figured prominently at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in New York, which concluded on 9 November. During the 2015 session, 32 states and five regional and other groups of states raise autonomous weapons concerns in addition to the ICRC and Campaign to

³ Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Holy See, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, US, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, as well as the European Union. Iraq, Montenegro, and Ukraine spoke, but did not provide their views on autonomous weapons.

⁴ Belgium, Brazil, China, Croatia, Cuba, France, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, UK, and US.

Stop Killer Robots.⁵ This is an increase on the 23 nations that raised autonomous weapons at the First Committee in 2014 and 16 that did so at the 2013 session.

Most states at 2015 UNGA First Committee requested further deliberations on killer robots at the CCW and several proposed the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts to carry out the work in 2016. During the session, the campaign held a side event briefing with Costa Rica, convened a media briefing, and met with UN disarmament chief as well as delegations such as France.

3. Government views

Since 2013, a total of 65 nations have publicly articulated autonomous weapons concerns. During 2015, 14 states elaborated their views on the topic for the first time: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Poland, Sri Lanka, and Zambia at the CCW killer robots meeting in April followed by Botswana, Kuwait, and Romania at UNGA First Committee in October and then by Iraq, Nicaragua, Kazakhstan, and Zimbabwe at the CCW's annual meeting in November.⁶

Many countries that have spoken publicly on killer robots are regularly engaging on the topic at the CCW yet few have made detailed statements articulating their national views on autonomous weapons and only the US, and to a lesser extent the UK, have issued written policy.

The following section reviews the highlights from states at the 2015 annual meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, including suggestions on process and substance to carry the work forward.

Process for 2016

All countries that spoke on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the 2015 annual meeting agreed that CCW deliberations on the topic should continue in 2016, but views differed when it came to retaining the same format of informal meetings of experts or stepping up the process by agreeing to more formal, substantive, and outcome-oriented deliberations.

⁵ Algeria, Austria, Botswana, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, and US) as well as the Africa Group, Arab Group, European Union, Non-Aligned Movement, and Nordic countries. See: <http://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2015/10/unga-report/> See also the extracts of statements in Annex II.

⁶ During 2013, a total of 44 states spoke 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 Nov.), Austria (30 May), Belarus (14 Nov.), Belgium (11 Nov.), Brazil (30 May), Canada (11 Nov.), China (30 May), Costa Rica (29 Oct.), Croatia (15 Nov.), Cuba (30 May), Ecuador (29 Oct.), Egypt (30 May), France (30 May), Germany (30 May), Ghana (14 Nov.), Greece (29 Oct.), Holy See (14 Nov.), India (30 Oct.), Indonesia (30 May), Iran (30 May), Ireland (29 Oct.), Israel (15 Nov.), Italy (14 Nov.), Japan (29 Oct.), Lithuania (14 Nov.), Madagascar (14 Nov.), Mexico (30 May), Morocco (30 May), Netherlands (29 Oct.), New Zealand (30 Oct.), Pakistan (30 May), Russia (30 May), Sierra Leone (30 May), South Africa (30 Oct.), South Korea (14 Nov.), Spain (11 Nov.), Sweden (30 May), Switzerland (30 May), Turkey (14 Nov.), Ukraine (14 Nov.), UK (30 May), and US (30 May). During 2014, seven states spoke on the topic for the first time: Bulgaria (23 Oct.), Czech Republic (13 May), Finland (22 Oct.), Guatemala (16 May), Mali (13 May), Norway (13 May), and Palestine (13 Nov.). Fifteen more states spoke on the matter for the first time during 2015: Bolivia (17 Apr.), Botswana (27 Oct.), Chile (13 Apr.), Colombia (17 Apr.), Denmark (13 Apr.), Iraq (13 Nov.), Kazakhstan (Nov.), Kuwait (26 Oct.), Lebanon (26 Oct.), Nicaragua (Nov.), Poland (13 Apr.), Romania (26 Oct.), Sri Lanka (13 Apr.), Zambia (17 Apr.), and Zimbabwe (12 Nov.).

A dozen states expressed their support for the establishment of an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the matter during the April meeting on killer robots and/or First Committee in October.⁷ Some of these states, particularly the US, subsequently dialed back their support to a preference for more informal meetings. At the 2015 annual meeting Austria, Croatia, the Holy See, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Switzerland called for a GGE, while New Zealand and others said they were flexible on format.

Russia said it supported further discussions, but was adamant that it is “premature to step up the mandate and to discuss this issue in an official format because for the time being we deal with virtual technology that does not have any operating models.” Russia described the LAWS as “raw and rather controversial.”

Other states expressed a preference the current format of informal meetings, such as Belgium, South Korea, the UK, and the US. France said the Fifth Review Conference would be an opportunity to establish a Group of Governmental Experts.

India supports continued discussion of LAWS “on the basis of an agreed mandate” and proposed adding an additional element to see if the 2016 meeting can agree by consensus to recommendations on further work to be undertaken by the CCW on LAWS at the Fifth Review Conference. No state objected to the proposal, which was rolled into the 2016 mandate text as the only new element from previous years.

Many states flagged the CCW’s Fifth Review Conference in 2016 as a key time for action while Austria, Ecuador, Pakistan, Switzerland and others expressed support for the president’s proposal to divide the Review Conference work into two committees that address 1) the status and operation of the CCW and its protocols (Main Committee I) and 2) lethal autonomous weapons systems (Main Committee II). Spain expressed support but cautioned, “We should avoid believing this will lead to the creation of an additional protocol.”

Ireland said it is troubled by potential use of autonomous weapons outside of armed conflict, such as in law enforcement, and suggested the Human Rights Council should discuss this aspect. Brazil and Mexico, along with the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and its member NGOs, agreed that deliberations on LAWS don’t have to be restricted to the CCW because of their implications for human rights and global peace and stability. Sierra Leone said there is room for multi-disciplinary group that includes human rights experts.

There were many expressions of support for the role played by civil society in informing and spurring the debate as well as participating in the CCW process. These are discussed later in the campaign activities section.

To regulate or ban?

At the 2015 CCW annual meeting, Zimbabwe called for a preemptive ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems, becoming the ninth state to endorse the ban call after Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador,

⁷ Austria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, and the US.

Egypt, Ghana, Holy See, Pakistan, and the State of Palestine. In its first statement on the matter, Iraq recognized the danger posed by lethal autonomous weapon systems, which it said should be regulated or prohibited altogether. During the 2015 annual meeting, Cuba, Ecuador, and Pakistan reiterated their calls to preemptively ban lethal autonomous weapons systems.

China proposed that states work to achieve a legally-binding instrument to preemptively ban weapons that don't exist now but would emerge in future, which it referred to as "certain evil weapons." However, China did not address the matter of banning lethal autonomous weapons systems. Algeria and Sri Lanka raised the precedent provided by CCW Protocol IV banning blinding lasers.

Israel said does not support a preemptive ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems as it prefers a step-by-step or incremental approach "to assess various aspects." The UK said it sees a need for further work, but is not convinced of the value of different guidelines or regulations as it views existing international humanitarian law as sufficient. The US reiterated its position that it is premature to consider the call for a ban on LAWS and repeated that its DoD policy on autonomy in weapons neither encourages nor prohibits the development of LAWS.

Meaningful human control

The notion that weapons should remain under meaningful human control has received significant support from an array of states since the first CCW meeting on killer robots in May 2014. At the 2015 annual meeting, many states requested further consideration of the concept of meaningful human control in 2016, including Austria, Croatia, Germany, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Belgium, Colombia, Sweden, and the ICRC affirmed the importance of humans being in control of weapons systems. Russia used the April 2015 meeting to reaffirm the importance of upholding meaningful human control over autonomous weapons systems.

On the other hand, the US argued that the concept of meaningful human control is "too narrow" and is tantamount to a ban on autonomous weapons. It cited a 2012 Department of Defense policy that requires adequate levels of human judgment. Israel said the concept of meaningful human control is too "vague." India observed that there are still wide divergences on a number of topics, including meaningful human control and differences between oversight, review, control, and judgment. Pakistan said that meaningful human control provides an approach to addressing this issue but is not a solution to problems LAWS pose.

China said that meaningful human control and concepts of human judgment may be useful, but they cannot replace the need for a definition clear definition of LAWS. China, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Spain, and the US also requested a focus on developing the definition and/or characteristics of LAWS.

Human Rights Watch confirmed that the requirement for meaningful human control is identical to a preemptive prohibition on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Another co-founder of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Article 36, said that the process of understanding the nature of human control of current systems "will help define the limits to acceptable and desirable autonomy in the critical functions of weapons systems," which in turn will help with efforts to develop an

international instrument prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons systems, which are weapons that operate without meaningful human control.

International law and weapons reviews

Many states at the 2015 annual meeting affirmed that existing international humanitarian law (IHL) applies to the development and use of new weapons systems, including LAWS. New Zealand emphasized the importance of ensuring compliance with IHL and of ensuring “that command and control arrangements maintain clear legal accountability.” Ireland and others agreed that development of new weapons must not be contrary to IHL.

States including Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, and Pakistan argued that LAWS would not be able to comply with IHL, and furthermore are “at odds with moral considerations.” Switzerland also called on states to look beyond IHL compliance to consider ethical concerns.

China said the issue of LAWS shouldn’t be reduced or simplified to one of international humanitarian and human rights law because “there is a need for a systematic solution and we should approach it in a comprehensive manner.” Similarly, India stated that LAWS should be assessed not only for compatibility with international humanitarian law, but also for their impact on security.

Countries including Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, the UK, and the US suggested discussing the application of weapons reviews as required by article 36 of Additional Protocol I of the 1977 Geneva Conventions. The ICRC however noted that LAWS raise profound questions about the role of humans in the use of force and the taking of human life, questions which cannot be left to national weapons reviews alone.

Ethics, proliferation, security, and other concerns

Many states explicitly rejected the idea that matters of life and death should be delegated to machines, including Ireland, Mexico, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Zimbabwe. Almost every state that spoke flagged the importance of ethical and moral questions raised by LAWS.

India expressed concern at the likely proliferation of LAWS and affirmed the need to strengthen the CCW through increased systemic controls on international armed conflict in a manner that avoids widening the technology gap between states. China also expressed concern at arms races involving LAWS.

4. Campaign activities

After the April 2015 experts meeting, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots continued and intensified outreach aimed promoting agreement to continue the CCW process. Its coordinator and campaign representatives followed up with individual states to encourage their support in November for more substantive outcome-oriented CCW deliberations held over a longer period of 2-4 weeks during 2016.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots welcomed and promoted the 28 July open letter signed by more than 2,800 artificial intelligence experts calling for a ban on autonomous weapons.

Throughout 2015, campaign representatives participated in numerous events alongside AI experts who signed the letter. Professor Stuart Russell addressed the April 2015 CCW meeting on killer robots, while Professor Toby Walsh of the University of New South Wales, addressed a Campaign to Stop Killer Robots briefing at the UNGA First Committee in October 2015.

The Permanent Mission of the Costa Rica to the UN in New York and the campaign held a lunchtime side event at UNGA First Committee on October 20 with Walsh as well as Dr. Ian Kerr, the Canada Research Chair in Ethics, Law and Technology at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law, who is a member of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC), a co-founder of the campaign. Miriam Struyk from PAX facilitated the briefing, which also featured remarks by campaign coordinator Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch and Richard Moyes from Article 36. A lively Q & A followed the presentations with comments and questions from Australia, China, Croatia, Netherlands, New Zealand, the US, and other representatives. A VICE News reporter who attended the side event briefing subsequently quoted the US questions in his [article](#).

The first side event briefing held at the 2015 session of UNGA First Committee was on autonomous weapons and cyber warfare on 9 October with remarks by US academics Heather Roff, Patrick Lin, and Ken Anderson. Roff is a member of ICRAC.

Several campaign members issued new publications in advance of the CCW meeting in November 2015, including a Human Rights Watch memo for CCW delegates entitled "[Precedent for Preemption: The Ban on Blinding Lasers as a Model for a Killer Robots Prohibition](#)" and an Amnesty International list of "Ten Reasons Why it's Time to get Serious about Banning 'Killer Robots.'"

During the CCW's annual meeting the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots made numerous substantive contributions, including a concluding side event briefing with ICRAC's Noel Sharkey, Steve Goose of Human Rights Watch, and campaign coordinator Mary Wareham. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots made a statement to the meeting, as did its member NGOs Article 36, Human Rights Watch, PAX, and WILPF. The campaign and campaign representatives reported from the deliberations on Twitter, while Reaching Critical Will maintained a dedicated CCW [website](#) and issued daily highlights.

In his opening address to the meeting, the UN Secretary-General paid tribute to role of civil society and scientists in bringing attention to challenges posed by autonomous weapons. During the meeting more than a dozen states expressed support for the continued participation of civil society representatives in the CCW, with several adding "in accordance with the rules of procedure."⁸ In a statement issued at the end of the meeting, the campaign referred to its exclusion from the consultation as unfortunate and noted Mexico's affirmation in plenary and the UK ambassador's private remarks to campaign representatives that the incident did not set a precedent for future deliberations. Since 1995, the precedent at CCW has been to allow non-governmental organizations to attend all sessions, including informal consultations, which are off-the-record.

⁸ Austria, Bulgaria, Colombia, France, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as the European Union. Mexico and Sierra Leone affirmed the need for human rights experts to engage in the CCW process on killer robots.

In 2016, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots intends to participate fully in the April experts meeting on killer robots and urge states to prepare concrete substantive recommendations that chart the course for future action after the CCW's Review Conference in December.

Outside of the CCW process, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots continues to call on all countries 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. Elaborate other ways that concerns about autonomous weapons can be addressed at the international, regional, and national levels and become champions of the ban call.

For more information, please see:

- UN [webpage](#) on the CCW's 2015 annual meeting
- [Report](#) by WILPF's [Reaching Critical Will](#).
- [Storify](#) prepared from tweets by [@BanKillerRobots](#) and others [tweeting](#) the meeting.
- Video footage by [PAX News Agency](#)
- Web posts on the [CCW outcome](#) (13 Nov.) and [2015 meeting on killer robots](#) (17 Apr.)

Annex I: CCW Country Statements

Convention on Conventional Weapons
12-13 November 2015

The following extracts on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) come from statements made at the 2015 Meeting of High Contracting Parties of the CCW in the general exchange of views on 12 November and/or the informal session held the next day. Some statements are available in full from the websites of the United Nations and Reaching Critical Will, while many extracts are from notes taken by members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. As such we recommend that these remarks be checked with the source before re-publication as the notes are paraphrased and do not represent a verbatim recording.

Algeria

General Exchange of Views⁹

The ban on blinding laser weapons shows how we must have the appropriate answer to new technologies. We commend the efforts to discuss lethal autonomous weapons systems and those of chair of the last meeting Ambassador Michael Biontino. We have taken note of the chair's report on the April 2015 meeting and note the progress made as we prepare for the Fifth Review Conference.

Argentina

General Exchange of Views¹⁰

The Convention on Conventional Weapons is the appropriate forum for new instruments on weapons that yet to be fully governed. There is a possibility that lethal autonomous weapons systems will be used in line with international humanitarian law principles. The legal and humanitarian implications of their use should be assessed with compliance with international instruments in international field on basis of those principles. Whilst technology is not yet mature it could be available in future and as such the use of lethal autonomous weapons systems should be restricted. Difficulties of communications and control would give rise to shortcomings and results that are difficult to predict. Human decision-making power could mitigate these risks. The Fifth Review Conference represents an excellent opportunity to review all issues. We encourage the inclusion of consideration of lethal autonomous weapons systems under the work of Main Committee II to further enhance discussion of this topic.

Australia

General Exchange of Views¹¹

⁹ Statement of Algeria, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from French.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/4A68B0113E822805C1257F0F00361BBB/\\$file/algeria.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/4A68B0113E822805C1257F0F00361BBB/$file/algeria.pdf)

¹⁰ Statement of Argentina, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from Spanish.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/F1246E0A1104E749C1257F0F0036BF33/\\$file/argentina.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/F1246E0A1104E749C1257F0F0036BF33/$file/argentina.pdf)

¹¹ Statement of Australia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

Australia was pleased to participate in the informal experts' meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems held in May 2015 and was satisfied with its outcome. Australia supports further informal exploratory discussion on LAWS in 2016 under the CCW framework to allow states parties to develop a deeper and more informed understanding on the possible technical, military utility, legal, and ethical considerations associated with the development and use of LAWS. Parties to the CCW must continue to work to ensure that the Convention fulfils its mandate and maintains its relevance to actual weapons development and use, and the effects they have on human beings and communities.

Austria

General Exchange of Views¹²

As you [chairman] pointed out in your recent letter, one of the key issues to be decided on at this year's Meeting of States Parties is the 2016 mandate on lethal autonomous weapons systems. We commend past efforts undertaken by France and Germany in bringing together, in the framework of the Convention, on two occasions experts from various fields to discuss this issue. We therefore support your proposal to put LAWS on the agenda of Main Committee II at the 2016 Review Conference. In order to make the discussions of the Main Committee II about LAWS successful, we should use the year or so remaining until the Review Conference to prepare them well. On the occasion of the expert meeting last April, Austria and a couple of other delegations spoke in favor of the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts. This could be a forum for bringing such substantive preparation. A report presenting the work of group to the Review Conference could focus on a limited number of precise questions which are directly linked with the cause of the Convention. Among them the issue [of the] sufficiency of existing international humanitarian law to restrict the development and use of LAWS; the issue of acceptability under the Martens clause, referring to the dictates of public conscience; and what meaningful human control entails in the context of the discussion. Past discussions of LAWS, by the way, have benefited greatly from the active involvement of academia and civil society at large. This example leads me to my concluding remark. In the modern world, governments can no longer pretend to have exclusive responsibility and control over important international policy issues. We can only benefit within the CCW from a spirit of openness allowing for broad non-discriminatory participation of delegates not affiliated to national governments.

Belgium

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems¹³

It is important to continue discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems. We must maintain human control in the use of robotic weapons. (refers to Holy See). The fact that humans are slow in process guarantees against snowballing. There is a need for further consideration of ethical aspects. Highlights Professor Lambert's report on "the ethics of robotics." Legal issues also need

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/3BDBBA19D244DEC9C1257F0F0036EF5E/\\$file/australia.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/3BDBBA19D244DEC9C1257F0F0036EF5E/$file/australia.pdf)

¹² Statement of Austria, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/DFDE4C60F6F6F1CCC1257F0F00371894/\\$file/austria.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/DFDE4C60F6F6F1CCC1257F0F00371894/$file/austria.pdf)

¹³ Intervention of Belgium, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Translated from French.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/6AEC4DBB521CDC1257F0F004BD7D6/\\$file/2015_CCWMSP_LAWS_Belgium.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/6AEC4DBB521CDC1257F0F004BD7D6/$file/2015_CCWMSP_LAWS_Belgium.pdf)

to be examined, including weapons reviews. We not exclude the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts, but for now think it should be dealt here as an informal meeting.

Bulgaria

General Exchange of Views¹⁴

The CCW, as a forum that gathers diplomatic and military expertise, is a right place to address issues of new and emerging types of weapons and technologies and their relevance to the principles of international humanitarian law. In this regard we appreciate the discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems initiated by France in 2014 and continued during the informal meeting of experts in April this year under the chairmanship of Ambassador Biontino of Germany. The meeting addressed important legal, technical, military, and ethical aspects of this issue. We support the continuation of this discussion in order to further deepen the understanding on this topic ... I would like to express our appreciation for the valuable contribution of civil society representatives to the work of the CCW. They bring knowledge and expertise that are beneficial to our deliberations. We support continuous participation of the civil society representatives in the CCW in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Brazil

General Exchange of Views¹⁵

We are following with interest the discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems and recognize the complex and ethical implications, including potential violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Brazil therefore supports the proposal to discuss them further and advance the debate. This does not mean precluding treatment of matter in other fora, such as the Human Rights Council. We look forward to discussing proposals presented by chair, in particular during the Review Conference, and are ready to contribute to further discussion.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems¹⁶

There is still work to be done on lethal autonomous weapons systems and the CCW is the appropriate forum for these discussions. Nonetheless this work should not preclude deliberations in other forums, like the Human Rights Council. We support deliberations elsewhere to complement discussions here as it is important to consider lethal autonomous weapons systems through different perspectives in accordance with respective mandates. Brazil supports moving forward and supports any proposal that leads to a more focused discussion for more useful information and clarity.

¹⁴ Statement of Bulgaria, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/D49FFD4FEFBC3F19C1257F0F00375D9F/\\$file/bulgaria.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/D49FFD4FEFBC3F19C1257F0F00375D9F/$file/bulgaria.pdf)

¹⁵ Statement of Brazil, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Brazil.pdf

¹⁶ Intervention of Brazil, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

China

General Exchange of Views¹⁷

Science and technology have indeed benefited mankind. Meanwhile their military applications also pose immense potential risks and threats to the human security and even survival. The international community should abide by the existing international law, adhere to the concept of for all security, commit to preventive diplomacy, so as to check the emerging arms race in the hi-tech field and safeguard international peace and stability. In this regard, the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems is a typical example. This issue is very complicated as it involves political, economic, military, technical, legal, ethical and various other factors. The international community should attach high importance to this issue, and have in-depth discussions on relevant aspects including definition, scope, applicability of international law etc, so as to gradually deepen understanding, build up consensus while refraining from making hasty decisions. At the current stage, China supports further discussions under the framework of the Convention. We hope that such discussions will be in line with the purposes and objectives of the Convention, take into full consideration of the legitimate concerns of all countries, in particular the developing countries, and ensure equal and inclusive participation by all Parties concerned.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems¹⁸

China is supportive of informal experts meetings and it is important that countries especially developing states have a good understanding when formally establishing a governmental working group. In meantime, when we invite expert panelists we should bear in mind the principle of geographical equity. Lethal autonomous weapons systems pose not only humanitarian concerns, but we should be aware of their impact on the strategic balance and on disarmament processes. In long run, the development of this technology could endanger the existence of humankind. We can't reduce or simplify the issue into just one of international humanitarian and human rights law. It's a complicated issue and closely related to existing systems. There is a need for a systematic solution and we should approach it in a comprehensive manner. Meaningful human control and concepts of human judgment may be useful but cannot replace the need for a definition clear definition of LAWS. Self-discipline, transparency, and weapons reviews are neither sufficient nor reliable. We cannot legitimize weapons that should be unlawful. We should work for a legally-binding instrument to ban preemptively weapons that don't exist now but would emerge in future, certain "evil" weapons. Be careful when say IHL applies to all weapons as it may legitimize certain weapons that shouldn't be legitimate. Prevention of arms race is needed. Don't give a few states the freedom to develop these weapons. Given dual use, we should ensure that the rights of developing countries to peaceful technologies should not be jeopardized, and should not create discriminatory barriers.

Colombia

General Exchange of Views¹⁹

¹⁷ Statement of China, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/hom/t1314777.htm>

¹⁸ Intervention of China, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

¹⁹ Statement of Colombia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from Spanish. [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/7406CFFAADCEB10EC1257F0F0037984E/\\$file/colombia.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/7406CFFAADCEB10EC1257F0F0037984E/$file/colombia.pdf)

Regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems we support a wider format of meetings to continue discussing the technical, legal, military, and humanitarian aspects of these weapons as there is still no internationally accepted definition of lethal autonomous weapons, autonomy, or meaningful human control. Colombia holds that human beings must decide the targets of any type of weapon because this is the only way to minimize the risk of indiscriminate attacks on civilians. The CCW is the appropriate framework for initial discussions on regulation.

Croatia

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems²⁰

Thank you Mr. President for giving us the floor on this very important topic. Informal discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) have been taking place within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) for the last few years. Based on these discussions we now have a better understanding of lethal autonomous weapons systems; yet many unanswered questions remain, including those that raise fundamental ethical, legal, operational and political concerns. For Croatia, a key question is whether these new technologies would be compliant with the rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including those of distinction, proportionality and military necessity, as well as their potential impact on human rights and compliance with International Human Rights Law (IHRL). The principle of “meaningful human control” is something that is very important to us because we believe that humans should always bear the ultimate responsibility when dealing with questions of life and death. We do believe that the CCW, as an important treaty regulating means and methods of warfare, is the appropriate forum to deliberate the issue of LAWS further. We support a more robust mandate in the CCW, which can lead to concrete results and ensure that the challenge posed by LAWS will be adequately addressed. We are therefore in favor of establishing a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that could come up with recommendations for further steps, which could be taken into account at next year’s review conference. In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate our position that fundamental questions of life and death cannot be assigned to armed autonomous weapons systems, having in mind the lack of accountability that would exist for the unlawful harm caused by such weapons. It is therefore high-time “to pick up the pace of discussions” and turn words into action.

Cuba

General Exchange of Views²¹

One of the issues that the members of this Convention have followed is that of autonomous weapons. In this regard, Cuba has serious doubts about the compliance and enforcement that may be made of the rules and principles of international law with the use of lethal weapon autonomous systems. We believe close attention should be given to this issue during the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference. Cuba considers that the autonomous lethal weapons should be prohibited and that also multilateral organizations should work with a view to reaching a legally binding

²⁰ Intervention of Croatia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/13Nov_Croatia-LAWS.pdf

²¹ Statement of Cuba, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. <http://spanish-language.foreignaffairs.co.nz/2015/11/17/cuba-urges-industrialized-countries-to-reduce-significantly-the-production-and-trade-of-conventional-weapons/#sthash.quE2mewC.dpuf>

instrument in the UN framework, or as an additional protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, referring to the drones.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems²²

We should address problems proactively and develop legally binding instrument in the framework of CCW establishing a comprehensive prohibition of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). Prohibit these weapons before they are used and added to the list of weapons designed to annihilate humans. Our discussions should not focus only on autonomy but also lethality. Machines can't be held accountable and neither can state be responsible for wrongful acts. There are factors that prevent LAWS from comply with international law because they can't satisfy international humanitarian and human rights law. So they should not be given the power to decide who should live and who should die. Lack of senses, inability to understand context, and it is difficult for software to distinguish actions such as a soldier surrendering. We question their ability to differentiate between lawful and unlawful orders. LAWS would exacerbate the divide or asymmetry between rich and developing countries. Armed conflict would no longer be a means of last resort, so increased number of conflict. Because there are no international standards on LAWS, according to international law states must ascertain whether new weapons would violate IHL and be prohibited. Factors that prevent compliance with IHL include lack of performance and comprehension of the law. The use of semi-autonomous weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicles should not be excluded from this analysis. The abundant human and financial resources for LAWS should be used to fight poverty. Cuba wants states to deepen and enlarge discussions on LAWS as well as ensure they are open, inclusive and transparent. We must prohibit LAWS before future generations are harmed.

Ecuador

General Exchange of Views²³

On lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), we congratulate Germany for its excellent leadership of the experts group meeting and for the comprehensive report. The week of discussions covered important issues that enabled us to further our knowledge of this complex topic. There are still more questions than answers. It is our view that these weapons would not comply with principles of international humanitarian law. We believe also that it's difficult to apportion responsibility for potential use. They are at odds with morals and should be prohibited. There is a need for more discussion through a group of experts meeting in 2016 that can return to the Review Conference with further elements for decision-making. At the Fifth Review Conference, Ecuador supports the division of committees, including by making Main Committee II responsible for considering LAWS.

Finland

General Exchange of Views²⁴

²² Intervention of Cuba, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Translated from Spanish.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/1C7851D43883B6A3C1257F0F005CA7BF/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Cuba.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/1C7851D43883B6A3C1257F0F005CA7BF/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Cuba.pdf)

²³ Statement of Ecuador, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from Spanish.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/23442840B39EF5BFC1257F0F0037F9B6/\\$file/ecuador.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/23442840B39EF5BFC1257F0F0037F9B6/$file/ecuador.pdf)

²⁴ Intervention of Finland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

States have an obligation to assess and review the legality of new weapons. We welcome more focused discussions on LAWS within the CCW. We look forward to intensive discussions of this complicated issue with aim of taking the process forward at the Review Conference next year.

France

[General Exchange of Views](#)²⁵

Lethal autonomous weapon systems pose a fundamental issue for the future of arms control. We hail the fruitful discussions including during the experts meetings. The wealth of discussions demonstrates well the relevance of this forum, which brings together legal, diplomatic, and military expertise. France likes the active participation of civil society as it shows our convention is relevant and anchored in civil society. We support a continuation work on LAWS to study closely of their characteristics and confirm our shared understanding of autonomy as meaning the total lack of human supervision and unpredictability of action.

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)²⁶

France supports deepening work on lethal autonomous weapon systems in 2016. We need a common understanding of LAWS to ensure we're talking about same thing and circulated non-paper on their definition in April. We could only tolerate LAWS if they were to comply with IHL and were only used in armed conflict. The CCW is the appropriate framework to discuss this issue as it makes it possible for all stakeholders to participate. We are in favor of a formal meeting of experts with the same mandate as in 2015 as well as developing recommendations, including on how to best continue discussions on LAWS. France would be happy to be a friend of the presidency. The Review Conference is an opportunity to discuss a Group of Governmental Experts. In the meantime, continue and enlarge discussions and develop recommendations.

Germany

[General Exchange of Views](#)²⁷

Germany welcomes the continuation of a thorough and systematic international debate on lethal autonomous weapon systems. The second informal meeting of experts in May 2015 showed the widespread international interest in this emerging issue. The first substantial report, submitted by the German chairperson of the informal meeting of experts, reflects the state of the debate and should serve as a basis for our future work. On the substance, Germany shares the common understanding of the international community that it is indispensable to maintain human control over the decision to kill another human being. The call for increased transparency, oversight and accountability expressed in the recently published study of UNODA on Armed Unmanned Aerial

http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Finland.pdf

²⁵ Statement of France, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from French.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/CF2AB9055E17E1C7C1257F0F003855AE/\\$file/france.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/CF2AB9055E17E1C7C1257F0F003855AE/$file/france.pdf)

²⁶ Intervention of France, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Translated from French.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/BF071E828AB7A6EFC1257F0F004C100E/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_France.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/BF071E828AB7A6EFC1257F0F004C100E/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_France.pdf)

²⁷ Statement of Germany, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/913B2B14EFC38C3CC1257F0F004802B7/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_GenStmnt_Germany.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/913B2B14EFC38C3CC1257F0F004802B7/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_GenStmnt_Germany.pdf)

Vehicles points in the right direction. Germany sees merit in discussing new confidence building measures like elaborating further on the idea to share information on national regulations, to look for a common understanding and to discuss possible procedures for detecting transgressions in the direction of LAWS at early stage. As a contribution to such a discussion Germany initiated a study and a workshop on Article 36 of the Additional Protocol I in light of the increasing autonomy in weapon systems. The study will be prepared in Geneva on November 12th by the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). After two informal meetings of experts, Germany would have welcomed a more formalized framework for progress in the international debate. However, the mandate of the meeting next year which we will have to decide upon in this conference should give us not only enough scope to deepen our understanding on the issue but to work as well on concrete proposals we could prepare with a view to the deliberations at the 5th Review Conference of the CCW next year. Germany stands ready to take again an active role in the further work on LAWS in the framework of the CCW.

Holy See

General Exchange of Views²⁸

The Holy See proposes to put in place a Groups of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems, another one on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and a third group for the revision of the protocol on incendiary weapons.

India

General Exchange of Views²⁹

6. The CCW should 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 2016, on the basis of an agreed mandate and consistent with the objectives and purpose of the Convention. India participated in the expert level meeting in April this year under the chairmanship of Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany. 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 a dissemination of such weapons systems. We would like the CCW process to emerge strengthened from these discussions, resulting in increased systematic controls on international armed conflicts embedded in international law in manner that does not widen the technology gap amongst states or encourage the increased resort to military force in the expectation of lesser casualties or that use of lethal force be shielded from the dictates of the public conscience, one of the key principles of international humanitarian law. The Fifth Review Conference next year is an important opportunity to review the implementation of the Convention as well as its Protocols and agree on specific measures to strengthen the CCW framework. To this end we support a substantive preparatory process based on consultations among all High Contracting Parties as well as taking into account the contributions of the larger CCW community including NGOs active in the field.

²⁸ Statement of Holy See, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

²⁹ Statement of India, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

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India supported discussion of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in 2014 and 2015. These discussions should look at compatibility with international humanitarian law and their effect on international security. India is concerned with proliferation. The aim should be to strengthen the CCW through increased systemic controls on international armed conflict in a manner that avoids widening the technology gap between states or increasing military force with expectation of lesser casualties. It is not clear if we have moved closer to a common understanding of LAWS as there are still wide divergences on a number of topics, including meaningful human control and differences between oversight, review, control, and judgment. When does weapon system cross line to become new weapon system, or use become a new method or means of war? There appears to be lack of clarity in this work. We should not jump to definite conclusions, but can't ignore the inexorable march of technology, particularly those of dual use nature. India supports continued discussion of LAWS on the basis of an agreed mandate, keeping in mind the meeting provides an opportunity to reduce divergences and increase common understandings. We should continue with the same mandate, but are flexible about adding an additional element to see if the 2016 meeting can agree by consensus on further work. This is a two-step process: First the chair prepares a report this year, which is not a negotiated document but a description of what happened. Second, would be an additional element to see if the 2016 experts meeting can agree by consensus to recommendations of what further work can be undertaken by the CCW on LAWS at the Review Conference. Avoid a direct clash with dates on the established disarmament calendar. We would like the chair to exhaust the principle of geographical rotation of the post of the German ambassador.

Iraq

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems³¹

It is clear that there is no specific definition of lethal autonomous weapon systems, which makes it hard to create standards governing their use. We recognize the danger posed by these weapons to civilians especially if in the wrong hands and understand the need to maintain meaningful human control. The topic requires more discussion. These weapons should be regulated to limit their use or prohibited altogether.

Ireland

General Exchange of Views³²

I would like to briefly address the question of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Ireland shares with civil society the concerns raised in relation to this issue. We welcome the active consideration of the matter at the CCW and the suggestions which are being made on how to take this work further, including through the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and also

³⁰ Intervention of India, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

³¹ Intervention of Iraq, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Translated from Arabic.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/64597570B3352E0FC1257F0F004C35D4/\\$file/2015_CCW_MSP_LAWS_Iraq.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/64597570B3352E0FC1257F0F004C35D4/$file/2015_CCW_MSP_LAWS_Iraq.pdf)

³² Statement of Ireland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/2E7B33B0502FF718C1257F11003C651D/\\$file/2015_CCW_MSP_Conf_General+Statement_Ireland.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/2E7B33B0502FF718C1257F11003C651D/$file/2015_CCW_MSP_Conf_General+Statement_Ireland.pdf)

at the Review Conference. We would like to thank the French and German chairmen of the two expert meetings held in 2014 and 2015, for their excellent conduct of these meetings. The expert meetings successfully identified many of the technical aspects raised by LAWS, but also highlighted fundamental legal, ethical, and societal concerns which, development of such weapons systems would present. I would like to acknowledge here also the tireless work of civil society which, in this as in many other fields, has been so influential in highlighting and bringing this issue to the attention of the international community. Ireland's starting position in relation to LAWS is that weapons should remain under effective Human Control. We agree that it is important for clarity and to move the discussion forward to give consideration to the technical and defining characteristics and principles of these weapons systems. Nonetheless, we feel the debate should be centered in international humanitarian law and also in international human rights law. The technical aspects of our debate, and any development of these technologies, should take place against that framework. We were happy to contribute to UNIDIR's excellent research project on the question earlier this year. The debate on lethal autonomous weapon systems reaches far beyond technical and legal complexities, raising fundamental questions about the role of humans in taking lethal decisions in armed combat. The decisive question may well be whether such weapons are acceptable at all under the principles of humanity, and if so, under what conditions. Ireland also has concerns regarding eventual use of these technologies outside of traditional combat situations, for example in law enforcement. This is one reason why we see value in discussing these questions in other relevant fora such as, for example, the Human Rights Council, as the issue of autonomy in weapons systems is also relevant for international human rights law. Ireland would like to conclude by noting the various suggestions made as to how we might develop a framework for taking forward the future debate on LAWS. In view of the many serious questions raised by LAWS, Ireland would like to support the proposal that the Review Conference should take up the question, which we see as a major emerging theme for weapons development in the 21st Century.

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We would like to thank the French and German Chairmen of the two expert meetings held in 2014 and 2015, for their excellent conduct of these meetings and valuable summary reports. The expert meetings successfully identified many of the technical aspects raised by LAWS, but also highlighted fundamental legal, ethical, and societal concerns which development of such weapons systems would present. I would also like to acknowledge here the tireless work of civil society which, in this as in many other fields, has been so influential in highlighting and bringing this issue to the attention of the international community. Ireland's starting position in relation to lethal autonomous weapon systems is that weapons should remain under meaningful human control. While we agree that it is important for clarity and in order to help move discussion forward, that we give consideration to the technical and defining characteristics and principles of these weapons systems. Nonetheless, we feel the debate ought to be firmly located within international humanitarian law and international human rights law and that the technical aspects of our debate, and any development of these technologies, should take place within that framework. In that regard, the mandate of the CCW and its Protocols is to regulate or ban specific categories of conventional weapons that have effects which trouble the conscience of humanity. As the drafters of our Convention recognized technological progress **demands** of us a constant vigilance to ensure

³³ Intervention of Ireland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/BBC1333662E5F947C1257F0F004C4E18/\\$file/2015_CCW_MSP_LAWS_Ireland.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/BBC1333662E5F947C1257F0F004C4E18/$file/2015_CCW_MSP_LAWS_Ireland.pdf)

that new weapons, means, and methods of warfare are not in violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. The debate on lethal autonomous weapon systems reaches far beyond technical and legal complexities, raising fundamental questions about role of humans in taking lethal decisions in armed combat. The decisive questions may well be whether such weapons are acceptable under the principles of humanity and, if so, under what conditions. Ireland also has concerns regarding eventual use outside of traditional combat situations, for example in law enforcement, and this is one reason why we see value in discussing these questions in other relevant fora such as, for example, the Human Rights Council, as the issue of autonomy in weapons systems is also relevant for international human rights law. Ireland believes the concept of meaningful human control is critical to the international community's consideration of the questions thrown up by the prospect of these weapons systems. Ireland notes in particular the valuable work of UNIDIR; we were pleased to make a contribution to the second phase of UNIDIR's project on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies. UNIDIR's paper, and other important work by civil society actors and academics is, as always, of assistance to States Parties in developing positions and moving forward with our work on this challenging theme for the 21st century. Ireland would like to thank those involved for their work and their activism in continuing to insist upon bringing this issue to the international community's attention. Ireland would like to conclude by noting the various suggestions made as to how we might develop a framework for taking forward the future debate on LAWS. We agree with those who have mentioned the need for greater transparency and the use of Article 36 weapons reviews in this context. Finally, Ireland would like to fully support the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts, to meet for at least one week in 2016 and make recommendations to the 2016 Review Conference on further steps, in order to address an issue which is emerging as a major theme in 21st century weapons development.

Israel

General Exchange of Views³⁴

Israel welcomes the work undertaken in relation to future lethal autonomous weapon systems over the last couple of years in the CCW, and participated actively in the expert meetings that took place in May 2014 and April 2015. Israel is of the view that this topic should be further discussed in an informal setting under the framework of the CCW. We will elaborate on this issue in the designated section later today.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems³⁵

At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Biontino of Germany for his excellent Chairmanship of the Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) held in April this year, and for his 'Food for Thought' paper that helped steer the discussion down a substantive and useful avenue. Israel is of the view that the CCW continues to be the most appropriate forum in which to discuss future Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, since it is both an IHL-focused framework and hosts the most relevant actors in this context. Discussions in the

³⁴ Statement of Israel, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/86E3E50D0D93735AC1257F0F004FC6E3/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_GenStmnt_Israel.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/86E3E50D0D93735AC1257F0F004FC6E3/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_GenStmnt_Israel.pdf)

³⁵ Intervention of Israel, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/047A4A0C35E5FEB6C1257F0F005AE9A0/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Israel.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/047A4A0C35E5FEB6C1257F0F005AE9A0/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Israel.pdf)

framework of the CCW have already promoted, and will continue to promote greater understanding of these weapon systems, and their future implications on the battlefield, in a manner that balances military necessity and humanitarian concerns. In this context, the expert meeting which was held in April of this year, in a manner similar to the expert meeting that was held in 2014, was insightful, enriching and useful. The discussions highlighted that it would be difficult, at this stage, to predict how future LAWS would look like, and what their capabilities and limitations will be. The discussion also emphasized that LAWS may be intended to be used in a wide range of operational environments, and that there should be a correlation between the characteristics of each system and its anticipated environment of use. Be that as it may, it was generally accepted that, like every other weapon, LAWS are subject to the Law of Armed Conflict. It was also widely acknowledged that each such system should undergo a preliminary review – legal and technical – before being employed on the battlefield, to ensure its compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict. We support these observations fully. At the same time, fundamental questions were left open. For example, there seemed to be no agreement as to the exact definition of LAWS, and there were clearly divergent views on questions relating to the appropriate level of human judgment, or control, over LAWS. In relation to this, many States – including Israel – were not supportive of the call made by some States for a preemptive ban on LAWS. Mr. President, Considering the many unknowns and divergent views on this issue, it is our view that an incremental, step by step, approach is not only preferable but inevitable. There is much work still ahead of us in order to effectively assess the various aspects of LAWS and potentially forge shared understandings regarding this issue. Israel welcomes the important work done so far with regard to LAWS in this forum, and would like to see this work continue. The mandate of the previous meetings of experts, namely "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", is yet to be exhausted. Therefore, Israel would support renewing a similar mandate, which many States showed interest in discussing in the last meeting of experts. Thank you.

Italy

[General Exchange of Views](#)³⁶

We welcome discussions on emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) to further enhance common understandings and exchange views on possibly additional new types of weapons that would be excessively injurious or indiscriminate. Italy strongly supports continued discussions building on the work on the meeting of experts held last April. The Review Conference is a time to take stock and an opportunity to further address issues highlighted so far. Italy acknowledges the essential contribution of civil society in this debate.

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The CCW is the most appropriate forum to consider lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). It should aim at arriving at common understandings of the exact object and scope of this issue.

³⁶ Statement of Italy, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Italy.pdf

³⁷ Intervention of Italy, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/13Nov_Italy.pdf

Italy shares the view that existing rules of IHL already provide the relevant elements for this matter. Italy will continue to support this process and is ready to participate in future work.

Japan

General Exchange of Views³⁸

With regard to the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), we commend the leadership of Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany at the 2nd Informal Meeting of Experts in April this year, which contributed to deepening our understanding on this issue by identifying various aspects. However, regarding the remaining important issues remain, such as the definition of LAWS and the concept of meaningful human control, we need to deepen our understanding through discussion. We are of the view that it is most important to identify broader common ground for our understanding, which could help start a formalized approach. In light of this, Japan supports the idea that this Meeting of High Contracting Parties will decide a new mandate for continued discussion in 2016. ... We consider the contribution of civil society and NGOs as a valuable part of the work of the CCW and also play an important role for the effective implementation and improvement of international humanitarian law. We support continued participation of civil society and NGOs in the CCW in accordance with its rules of procedure.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems³⁹

It important to clarify the definition of meaningful human control and develop a common understanding. Ensure an in-depth and holistic approach with various perspectives on technical, legal, and ethical aspects. We saw value in the last informal meeting of experts in April and suggest this format be maintained.

Kazakhstan

General Exchange of Views⁴⁰

Kazakhstan's delegation took part in the April meeting of experts, which provided an opportunity to identify the legal, technical, military and other aspects of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). It is clear this discussion is just beginning and further work is required to help shape an understanding of this technology. Kazakhstan believes it is important to continue formal and informal discussions in the future.

South Korea

General Exchange of Views⁴¹

It is also noteworthy that an in-depth and extensive discussion on the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) has been made within the framework of the CCW. With regard to the extension of the mandate for addressing the issue of LAWS we are in favor of continuous efforts

³⁸ Statement of Japan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/7BC0F52E6EC8FACCC1257F1100356265/\\$file/2015_CCW_MSP_Japan_General+Statement.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/7BC0F52E6EC8FACCC1257F1100356265/$file/2015_CCW_MSP_Japan_General+Statement.pdf)

³⁹ Intervention of Japan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁴⁰ Statement of Kazakhstan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁴¹ Statement of South Korea, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/7E68A59177E3C391C1257F0F003A7181/\\$file/rok.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/7E68A59177E3C391C1257F0F003A7181/$file/rok.pdf)

to clarify and better understand the technologies and relevant implications. Therefore, we fully support an extended mandate for an expert meeting on the topic, and look forward to continuing to seek common ground for further substantive discussion.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁴²

The 2015 CCW meeting of experts contributed to facilitating common understanding concerning the main elements of LAWS among CCW high contracting parties. Their efforts have led to an in-depth and substantive discussion on the technical issues, characteristics, possible challenges and ways forward in the area of LAWS, including the contentious notion of “meaningful human control” over the critical functions of selecting and engaging targets. Despite meaningful steps forward on the discussion, there remains room for attaining a common ground of understanding on several key issues. First, we need to further clarify the concept and scope of autonomy as well as the legality regarding use of autonomous weapons systems. Importantly, we must ensure that the issues on LAWS are not examined in isolation, but in relation with the tasks performed, the types of targets engaged and contexts implied. Regarding the definition of LAWS, we support the bottom-up approach that begins with a deliberation on the specific characteristics. In addition, we are of the view that the discussion on LAWS should not be carried out in a way that could hamper research and development of robotic technology for peaceful applications such as non-military use and civilian protection. My delegation also maintains the view that it would be more appropriate to focus on aspects of international humanitarian law and military security, while touching upon issues related to ethics and human rights as they relate to new weapons. Therefore, we believe that the most appropriate forum to further discuss LAWS is the CCW, which is setup to strike necessary balances between humanitarian concerns and security requirements. In this regard, my delegation strongly supports the idea that the relevant issues on LAWS should continue to be discussed within the framework of the CCW. Nevertheless, autonomous technology is an emerging area and we are still at the initial stages of addressing the notion of LAWS. In view of emerging technology and its dual-use characteristics as well as the fledgling state of the discussion we are in favor of spending more time in informal discussions seeking common understanding and solidifying national positions on LAWS, and by hearing again from experts and groups as well as sharing more information.

Mexico

General Exchange of Views⁴³

It is appropriate and relevant to discuss on current state of play of tech of warfare, including lethal autonomous weapon systems. These weapons lack intrinsic capacity to apply international humanitarian law principles; they distinguish or be proportionate as IHL require.

The 2016 Review Conference presents an opportunity to contribute via CCW to strengthening international disarmament and arms control architecture.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁴⁴

⁴² Intervention of South Korea, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁴³ Statement of Mexico, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. Translated from Spanish.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/BC025DA98FDCBCE9C1257F0F0039FCA5/\\$file/mexico.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/BC025DA98FDCBCE9C1257F0F0039FCA5/$file/mexico.pdf)

⁴⁴ Intervention of Mexico, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

Mexico welcomes Ambassador Biontino's report as balanced. It recalls the origins of CCW and notes that regulations on these matters and prohibitions still continues to meet with resistance. Mexico urges a cautious approach as part of a clearly defined framework. The burden of proof falls on the promoters of new technologies to prove they are compatible with IHL and not vice versa. Mexico is concerned that the argument for regulation might give legitimacy or lawfulness to weapons that might intrinsically violate IHL. LAWS couldn't meet standards of IHL. Their potential use represents a risk to human dignity and the right to life. It is appropriate to continue to debate this matter and enlarge discussions. Meaningful human control and critical functions could be concepts to explore. We shouldn't be restricted to the CCW, given the potential effects on human rights and global stability.

There is no consensus on the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts, but this discussion needs to be open to all that wish to participate and not restrict to a mere few. Mexico is not convinced of usefulness for moving to formal from informal. The concern is not linked to costs, but rather the nature of the group. It is premature to hear proposals on procedures and decision-making. We are far from being in a position to talk about how we take decisions (e.g. rules on consensus). Discuss first and then decide rules.

The need for an internationally-agreed framework on the future of LAWS. Technological application of advances in science must be viewed against international law. A formal open group of experts could be a matter of priority. Define a cut-off point as when these weapons don't need meaningful human control. Establish a working group with a mandate for the 2016 Review Conference. Endorse a formal follow-up mechanism. Use of LAWS is not foreseen but this body should ensure that this is indeed the case. Weapons with AI are being developed, tested and used so there is urgency in addressing LAWS. Intensify discussion and be more comprehensive to ensure protection of civilians. Mexico calls for multidisciplinary groups to participate, including human rights experts.

Netherlands

General Exchange of Views⁴⁵

Becoming a chair like a birthday, everyone asks to congrats you. We hope also be a present, a report that will bring us further. During next year's Review Conference, we will reflect on the goals of this convention for which LAWS are particularly relevant. It is very positive that a concerted effort is being taken by states and civil society to address LAWS. Old questions remain and new ones have been raised. We should look at the international humanitarian and human rights law framework with regard to legality of weapons systems. LAWS should remain within the boundaries of IHL.

It is time to take one step further. The Netherlands is in favour of establishing an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts that could discuss the issue more in-depth and come up with recommendations for further steps to be taken at next year's Review Conference. To make progress and find common elements on LAWS we believe discussions should focus deepening our understanding of what we mean by meaningful human control. We should also continue to explore if we could agree on definition of autonomous weapons systems. We should discuss Article 36 weapons reviews of autonomous weapons. The Netherlands has started a national review process. An independent study will be issued in October. We have started multi-era research project to develop national perspective on meaningful human control. Remain committed to LAWS

⁴⁵ Statement of Netherlands, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

discussions. The Review Conference is currently planned for 8 days, but we only need 5 working days.

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It is time to take discussions one step further. The Netherlands is in favor of establishing a Group of Governmental Experts, which could come up with further steps to take into account at Review Conference. We are aware there is currently no consensus on GGE, but see no issue in establishing a GGE with a discussion mandate. Focus on deepening understanding on what we mean by meaningful human control, explore the definition, and continue to discuss Article 36 reviews with review to identifying common ground on elements of LAWS.

New Zealand

General Exchange of Views⁴⁷

New Zealand is concerned about the complex legal and political challenges posed by the possibility of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). Given the pace of technological advances, the international community must ensure that international law, particularly international humanitarian law, is complied with when decisions are made around the development and use of new weapon systems, and that command and control arrangements maintain clear legal accountability. New Zealand has found the two Meetings of Experts on LAWS to be useful and informative, even though in many ways they have raised more questions than they have resolved – a sign, perhaps, of the complex and inter-connected nature of the issues raised by such weapon systems. With a view to the convening next year of the CCW Review Conference we support a strengthened mandate for further work within the CCW on this issue. We do not have strong views on the format that this should take but consider that, whether a Meeting of Experts or an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts, it should have a mandate that moves us forward in a concrete way and facilitates informed decision-making at the Review Conference.

Nicaragua

General Exchange of Views⁴⁸

On lethal autonomous weapon systems, we need to deepen our knowledge of these complex weapons and study their technical, legal, and military aspects. Their use does not guarantee distinction, proportionality nor precautionary principles as required by IHL. We reaffirm, in the absence of an international standard preventing their use, that such systems should be governed by existing principles of international law and the UN Charter.

Pakistan

General Exchange of Views⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Intervention of the Netherlands, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁴⁷ Statement of New Zealand, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_NZ.pdf

⁴⁸ Statement of Nicaragua, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/F6A08D38408A7395C1257F0F0049729D/\\$file/2015_CCW_MSP_GenStmnt_Nicaragua.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/F6A08D38408A7395C1257F0F0049729D/$file/2015_CCW_MSP_GenStmnt_Nicaragua.pdf)

⁴⁹ Statement of Pakistan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

We stress the urgency of creating a separate protocol to ban lethal autonomous weapon systems. Introduction of LAWS would be illegal, inhumane, unethical, and destabilizing for peace and security. We recognize urgency of creating a separate protocol to preemptively ban LAWS. Look forward to taking efforts to this end whether through an informal meeting of experts or a Group of Governmental Experts. The Fifth Review Conference will in accordance with past practice have two main committees. Main Committee I should review scope and operation of the convention and its protocols as well as consider any proposal for the convention and prepare the final documents. Main Committee II should consider proposals for additional protocols and take up LAWS. This would provide a useful opportunity to address the matter substantively. As for duration, there should be sufficient time for all substantive issues.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁵⁰

Lethal autonomous weapon systems have rightly been described as the next revolution in warfare, like gunpowder and nuclear weapons. They would fundamentally change the nature of war and it would by nature be unethical because they no longer have a human in the loop. The power to make life and death decisions cannot be delegated to machines. They lack compassion and intuition and cannot replace humans in taking the decision to take another human life. LAWS cannot be programmed to comply with IHL rules, including distinction, proportionality, and precaution. These require subjective human judgment. LAWS will lower the threshold for going to war and wars would be more frequent. They would undermine international peace and security as states would be unwilling to give them up. They represent an accountability vacuum and provide impunity to the user as unethical and unlawful. LAWS could be used in anonymous and clandestine operations, including targeting and attacking in other states. A fear of signature strikes (as with drones) and undermining of state sovereignty will make the world less secure. It would amount to one-sided killing. We risk the lives of civilians and non-combatants. An unchecked armed robots race could ensure, and could proliferate to non-state armed groups. They can never be fully predictable, and could fail for a number of reasons. There would always be a level of uncertainty on its interaction. Therefore these weapons would be illegal, unethical, inhumane, unaccountable, and destabilizing. LAWS should be preemptively banned through dedicated protocol of the CCW. Pakistan also calls for an immediate moratorium on production and use. Meaningful human control provides an approach to addressing this issue but is not a solution to problems LAWS pose. We are ready to move the debate to the next level: a formal meeting of experts in 2016 that produces a negotiated report. We heard your proposal and hope to have consensus on that proposal. Pakistan support Main Committee II taking up the LAWS at the Review Conference.

Peru

General Exchange of Views⁵¹

There is a need for further deliberations on ethical, legal, and societal considerations of lethal autonomous weapon systems. These international forums and spaces for discussion provide us the right framework for addressing the issues of such weapons. The sharing of information through the use of these forums will contribute to efforts to prevent unnecessary suffering in time of conflict. It is of vital importance that the experts meeting are continued in order to have more clarity on the development of fully autonomous weapon systems.

⁵⁰ Intervention of Pakistan, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁵¹ Statement of Peru, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

Poland

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)⁵²

We have gathered here again to decide on whether the discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems should be carried forward and what specific issues related to LAWS should prevail in our deliberations. We highly value the views and opinions that emerged from our debates so far and commend France and Germany for their perseverance and efficiency in chairing previous meetings. Poland is convinced that this discussion is timely and necessary and we regard the CCW as the most useful and efficient framework to address the challenges posed by new weapons systems. Regarding the year 2016, Poland is ready to continue this debate within the informal meeting of experts. We are convinced that it is worth building on the experience gained in the meetings in May 2014 and April 2015 and organize the next meeting in an even more inclusive and open way. It is also important to accommodate a wide scope of views and opinions, expressed by different players since we are dealing with a complex and multifaceted issue. The discussions held in April demonstrated that a number of High Contracting Parties regard “meaningful human control” (MHC) as having the potential to advance the debate on LAWS. Poland would like to explore such a possibility. We are interested notably in the practical applications of the MHC concept and its influence on the behavior of state institutions. Also, the concept of MHC may have significant implications for how we understand and define the idea of “meaningful state control” (MSC). By this, we mean that states have a special role to play in assuring institutional and procedural control over the development, production, acquisition, handling, storage, or international transfers and use of LAWS. Also, Poland notices direct links and implications of LAWS for international law. In present and future combat situations, the potential uses of such systems should take into account their compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law and principles guaranteed by the UN Charter. The responsibility to uphold the international law on behalf of the state as to the use of LAWS extends to all its actors, including every commander in the armed forces in the so called “accountability chain.”

Within available options, Poland would like to reiterate its readiness and flexibility to cooperate in developing a set of “best practices” in the areas of exports control. As a basis for our discussions we propose to make a clear distinction between armed, lethal autonomous weapon systems and unarmed autonomous systems for civilian applications. We would also like to suggest the export control of armed systems to be based on a munitions list, while the systems for civil uses on a dual-use good control list. Details of such a mechanism could be considered by a group of experts in 2016. Poland would also like to confirm its readiness to exchange information and experiences on the application of Article 36 of the Additional Protocol I and its openness to develop non-legally binding “best practices” document regarding legal weapons reviews, which could be later adopted by the CCW. It is worth noting that restrictions or prohibitions related to the use of conventional weapons can be found not only in international humanitarian law but also they result from provisions of international conventions on the same conventional weapons, which define international legal obligations in this respect for the countries that are party to them. If a consensus is reached among the High Contracting Parties, Poland would be ready to support the establishment

⁵² Intervention of Poland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2014.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/29EECD1BF9BCA41CC1257F0F004CDF25/\\$file/2015_C_CWMSP_LAWS_Poland.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/29EECD1BF9BCA41CC1257F0F004CDF25/$file/2015_C_CWMSP_LAWS_Poland.pdf)

of a Group of Governmental Experts and discuss definitions of LAWS as a component of a future mandate of the GGE. We hope the present Meeting of States Parties will decide on the continuation of discussions on the complexities of LAWS. Poland declares its flexibility and willingness to cooperate on other topics of interest.

Russia

General Exchange of Views⁵³

Let me also touch upon another issue of still growing international interest, as it was demonstrated at the second meeting of experts in April, that is – lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). We would like to thank our German friends and the Implementation Support Unit for good organization of the April event, which, in particular, reaffirmed the importance of upholding meaningful human control over such systems. However, we still very cautiously consider the prospects of future development of the LAWS issue that is raw and rather controversial. It would be premature to step up the mandate and to discuss this issue in an official format because for the time being we deal with virtual technology that does not have any operating models.

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This topic is too raw to be transferred for formal discussion. There is an absence of experimental models today. The discussions that took place, despite the fact they were informative, failed to identify core aspects on LAWS around which to deal further work. They didn't give rise to any substantial result. We are skeptical about the added value of restrictions on LAWS. Existing IHL when strictly complied with is already a significant barrier to development of such weapons systems. Russia opposes changing the existing LAWS mandate. We consider that significant human control must be upheld. As systems developed, responsibility must increase. Russia strictly adheres to its commitment under Article 36. A number of states that are calling for weapons review discussion not even parties to API. At same time, Article 36 can't be examined in isolation. References Fyodor Martens.

Sierra Leone

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁵⁵

I would like to thank Ambassador Biontino of Germany for successfully chairing the second Informal Meeting of Experts on LAWS in April this year. The CCW has now held two informal experts meetings on lethal autonomous weapons, and those have revealed, without doubt, that these weapons deserve to be given the very close attention of this body, which was created for this purpose. We have heard arguments and counter-arguments, but we have also read publications and participated in events, including those at this session, which address some of the claims we have heard in the informal expert group meetings. These include claims of cost-effectiveness that could be gained through the use of LAWS, the safety of their applications in marine environments among other claims. The need for an internationally agreed framework on the future of LAWS, as

⁵³ Intervention of Russia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Russia.pdf

⁵⁴ Intervention of Russia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁵⁵ Intervention of Sierra Leone, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/F0B1363B6B11F02AC1257F0F004D0D2F/\\$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Sierra+Leone.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/F0B1363B6B11F02AC1257F0F004D0D2F/$file/2015_CC_WMSP_LAWS_Sierra+Leone.pdf)

originally recommended the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions at the 23rd Session of the Human Rights Council, is increasingly apparent. Advances in science and technology should be encouraged and applauded but it is their applications which need to be seriously reviewed to ensure they do not breach international law, and that they conform to ethical and moral standards, and respect fundamental human rights. On no account should the lives of human beings be entrusted entirely to machines. It is time that the CCW move a step further after two years of informal deliberations on the subject. A formal open-ended Working Group of Experts should be set up as a matter of priority. This Working Group should be charged first and foremost with reviewing the state-of-the-art of the development of increasingly autonomous weapons and should define the cut-off point when these weapons can be considered as not requiring meaningful human control. It should therefore all the areas given in the report of the second informal experts' group meeting. The Working Group should present a first report with concrete recommendations to the 2016 Review Conference. We trust that we, as States Parties to the CCW will do the right thing and endorse a formal follow-up mechanism. Meanwhile, as we speak here today, weapons using the latest advances in technology, including artificial intelligence, are being developed, tested, and used. There is a sense of urgency in addressing LAWS. My delegation therefore suggests that the existing mechanisms for the legal review of all new weapons should be intensified to ensure that the lives of innocent civilians are not unduly lost, while awaiting the results of what could be protracted work by the formal working group. In addition, there is room for a multi-disciplinary group, including human rights experts, to address the subject and feed into the work of the Working Group.

Spain

General Exchange of Views⁵⁶

A week-long Review Conference would be more appropriate and functionally useful. Spain supports the proposal for two Main Committees. Main Committee II should address LAWS, although we should avoid believing this will lead to the creation of an additional protocol. We welcome the debate on LAWS and believe this working format would continue to be the best format, but we should avoid turning the Fifth Review Conference into a technical discussion. The outcome of the experts meeting will be the chair's report. We welcome discussions on the definition of LAWS and need to continue to set out degrees of autonomy. We seek to be governed by IHRL and IHL.

Sri Lanka

General Exchange of Views⁵⁷

The CCW can deal with emerging technologies. On LAWS, Sri Lanka supports continued discussions to facilitate better understanding of subject and for states to define their national positions. There are divergent viewpoints with regard to this issue and acceptability, which are not insurmountable that should discourage discussion. We will elaborate during our discussion on LAWS. CCW is the right framework for this discussion. Want consensus decision. Any future

⁵⁶ Statement of Spain, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Spain.pdf

⁵⁷ Statement of Sri Lanka, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

dialogue must be driven by member states within CCW. Recognizes important work of civil society of raising awareness.

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)⁵⁸

At the outset, I wish to join other colleagues in thanking Ambassador Biontino of Germany for the comprehensive report presented today. Sri Lanka wishes to commend him on the excellent manner in which he coordinated and chaired the informal meeting on LAWS last April. The meeting in our view was a success, which deepened our knowledge based on the informal meeting held in 2014. Delegations had the opportunity to participate in an interactive debate with the expert panelists providing for a rich discussion. We also note that 17 additional countries including Sri Lanka came to speak on their national positions at this year's informal meeting of experts indicating emerging interest on the subject. We hope that other states will also join in future debates on this subject.

The meeting held in April highlighted both the positive and negative aspects of the autonomous technology. Some argued that application of this technology in the military domain would better serve the legitimate military requirements such as the increasing the speed and accuracy of targeting, allowing access to areas difficult to reach, aiding in rescue operations, and increasingly defensive actions with less military cost etc. However we also heard counter arguments on the use of this technology in the military field, such as the issue of the accountability gap, lower predictability, IHL compatibility, vulnerability to cyber-attacks and the danger of these systems falling into the hands of an adversary, reducing the threshold for engaging in military interventions, and the possible catastrophic consequences of operational failures of such systems, etc. Looking into both these aspects it is our understanding that the debate on LAWS is not a question of whether to ban or not to ban the autonomous technology, but a question as to what this technology should be applied to and not applied to. Therefore, the debate should be exercise for exploring how we take preemptive actions on the development and use of lethal autonomous weapons, while not affecting the much required civilian and non-lethal military use. As such we hope that any action on regulating autonomous technology under a specific context, would not be considered as an attempt to prevent the peaceful use of the autonomous technology for non-lethal and defensive purposes. The Protocol IV of this Convention provides an example to this end, where the use of laser technology in a specific context was pre-emptively banned, but the same technology continued to be used for various other peaceful uses. The concerns over the concept of Dual-use technology in the nuclear field also have some relevance for the issue of LAWS. It is important to consider safeguards that could help avoid abuse or unintended consequences of technology for the humanity, beyond all arguments that attend upon the use of LAWS. One other important observation made during the presentations by the experts earlier this year, was that the technology in artificial intelligence and robotic technologies are advancing much faster, while the discussions on LAWs is moving relatively slowly. This underlines the need for more detailed deliberations on the subject. Thus, countries from global north and South must get involved more robustly in this process. Developing countries who are disadvantaged in access to such technologies would become more vulnerable during any warfare involving LAWS. Therefore, we encourage the countries in the global South to take particular interest in remaining more involved with the process of discussions on LAWS. It is also timely that South should evolve a shared, coherent perspective on LAWS. However capacity constraints are a serious concern, and the need for disarmament education and training in many developing countries is acute. The already shrinking space for

⁵⁸ Intervention of Sri Lanka, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

updating knowledge, gaining exposure and developing skills affects the ability of these countries to make well-informed and coordinated contributions to the discourses on disarmament and non-proliferation, including the issues under consideration.

During this year's experts' meeting, despite countries failing to agree on a common position relating to various aspects of LAWS, the meeting provided room for deepening knowledge on important aspects. Following two years of such intense technical discussion, we believe it's time for us as states parties to the CCW, to engage directly with each other, and discuss the issue comprehensively to find common ground on how to move forward. While presentations from different experts are no doubt useful, we must not confine ourselves to mere expert level discussions. Sri Lanka would like to see this body move beyond, where a dialogue among states would be at the center of any future discussions. We hope that such a process will help in ensuring clarity on the concerns of states, as well as create a matrix of common elements, which could be derived from the debate. As world leaders endorsed the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development this September in New York, momentum is being built to make the world a better place. The disarmament community also has an important role in this process, to discourage respective States entering into conflicts. The Global Peace Index of this year indicates that if the world decreased violence by 10%, it would generate enough money to increase the official development assistance from rich to poor countries by ten times and increase the earnings of 1.1 billion people living in extreme poverty under \$1.25 a day by three times. As the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated, the world is over-armed and peace is under-funded already. Therefore we appeal to countries to invest in peace rather than in devastating weapons, in order to ensure the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

From a national perspective, we are convinced that machines could neither be programmed to be perfect, nor could it replace human capacity on making decisions and judgments. In this context, leaving machines to decide in targeting a human is unacceptable, unethical and will make accountability elusive. The CCW forum should remain as the lead on this subject, as it strikes the right balance between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security aspirations of countries. It provides the opportunity for both states and civil society to engage. Sri Lanka supports continued deliberations on this subject, under the mandate of the CCW to convene another round of meeting with a focused mandate. We also note that the discussion should be centered on dialogue among states. We also wish to express our support for Ambassador Biontino to continue as the chair of the next dedicated meeting on LAWS. We are confident that with his experience from last year's meeting, he would be better positioned to guide the meeting, in order to reach common ground on the subject.

South Africa

General Exchange of Views⁵⁹

While artificial intelligence and robotics present both challenges and opportunities, we should always bear in mind that the possibility to weaponise such technology raises fundamental ethical, legal, operational, and political questions. My delegation believes that international humanitarian law should apply to all weapons, including lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). The concept of "meaningful human control" is something that my delegation is supportive of. In our view, there

⁵⁹ Statement of South Africa, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.
[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/E410A574F19CCE7AC1257F0F003AA8E0/\\$file/south+afri.ca.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/E410A574F19CCE7AC1257F0F003AA8E0/$file/south+afri.ca.pdf)

should always be meaningful human control on questions of life and death. It is therefore imperative that we deepen our understanding of the degree of human oversight or control that “autonomous weapons” – and even those that are reportedly “semi-autonomous” – would require. South Africa believes that [the] CCW, as an important treaty regulating means and methods of warfare, is the appropriate forum to address the issue of LAWS in an in-depth manner. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank civil society for their tireless efforts.

Sweden

General Exchange of Views⁶⁰

Civil society has many valuable contributions to make to our work and Sweden attaches great importance to NGO participation in CCW meetings. ... Sweden very much appreciated the opportunity at the expert meeting in April this year to continue discussions around lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we will therefore welcome a continued discussion of LAWS within the framework of the CCW. Sweden fully supports that idea to continue in 2016 discussions on the questions relating to emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Like many other Parties we would support a decision to create, at the Review Conference in 2016 if not before then, a Governmental Group of Experts to further examine this issue.

Switzerland

General Exchange of Views⁶¹

The CCW held in 2015 a second informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). We welcome the quality of the discussions as well as the substantive report of the event issued by the German Chair, Ambassador Michael Biontino. Discussions held so far have enabled us to make progress towards a common understanding of the challenges posed by LAWS and to come to some early conclusions. We welcome for instance the broad consensus that the CCW is the right forum to address the issue of LAWS. We also note that it is well understood among CCW High Contracting Parties as well as among observers that international law applies to all weapons systems, including LAWS, and has to be respected in all circumstances.

Yet, we also believe that we still have to continue and deepen our deliberations. As indicated in the way forward of the Chair’s report, a significant number of issues warrant further consideration. We will come back in greater details during the session on SALW on what would in our view constitute an appropriate direction and format for our future work. ... Fourth, the issue of LAWS and the manner in which we intend to move forward on the issue should also figure prominently at the Review Conference. In this context, we welcome the proposal that the issue of LAWS be addressed under Main Committee II at the Review Conference. The Review Conference will provide a good opportunity to build on the common understandings that have been achieved, to identify the concrete steps that we should take to meet the challenges posed by LAWS and to establish the necessary structures to produce the desired outcomes. ...

Fifth, we believe that it will also be important to look at the challenges posed by developments in the field of science and technology (S&T) as they relate to conventional weapons and how this

⁶⁰ Statement of Sweden, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

⁶¹ Statement of Switzerland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_Switzerland.pdf

could and should be addressed under the Convention. LAWS, which have quickly become a prominent topic in CCW, illustrate the importance of thoroughly and systematically consider such developments over time. In our view, Main Committee I would be well placed to discuss the added value of the establishment of an S&T review process, which would anticipate, and assess technological developments relevant to the Convention and its Protocols. CCW High Contracting Parties could be inspired by the manner other Conventions in the field of arms control and disarmament are dealing with such rapid changes.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁶²

As already stated during the General Debate, Switzerland welcomes the quality of the discussions and the work achieved since 2014 in the CCW, and we would like to thank the German Chair, Ambassador Michael Biontino, for the work undertaken and his readiness to continue this task. We also welcome the various contributions made over the past few years, including by international organisations, civil society and academia.

Regarding the continuation of our work, Switzerland would see value in the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), either now or at the Fifth Review Conference. If this year we decide to establish a Meeting of Experts, its mandate should reflect progress achieved so far and it should allocate sufficient time to do justice to the complexity of the issue. Most importantly, we should aim for an outcome document containing recommendations to be considered at the Review Conference.

In terms of substance, we can build our further work on the consensus among CCW High Contracting Parties as well as among observers that existing international law applies to all weapons systems, including LAWS, and has to be respected in all circumstances. In this context, we could already aim for specific results, for instance regarding legal reviews of new weapons. The implementation of legal reviews constitutes an important element in preventing or restricting the employment of new weapons, means and methods of warfare that would violate international law in some or all circumstances and deserves more in-depth discussions.

Besides this concrete area for further work, we still have to continue and deepen our deliberations on a number of issues, as indicated in the way forward of the Chair's report. This includes for instance the correlation between risks associated with LAWS and the characteristics of the respective systems. These risks would depend on their mobility, the environment and width of the area they operate in, the duration they are employed and the complexity or importance of the tasks delegated.

Finally, beyond ensuring compliance with international law, other concerns and possible challenges merit to be further addressed in the CCW. Discussions held so far revealed that ethical concerns with the possible development of LAWS persisted, notably for LAWS which would acquire and attack targets without appropriate human involvement. Equally, the consequences of the development of LAWS and their application in military and security operations raised a number of questions.

⁶² Intervention of Switzerland, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/13Nov_Switzerland.pdf

Turkey

General Exchange of Views⁶³

We welcome the informal discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in April of this year. We thank Germany for leading this useful discussions. It has been helpful for us to deepen our understanding in technical, legal, ethical, operational and military aspects of this rather new subject. We prefer to have a renewal of the mandate of another informal Meeting of Experts in 2016 in the framework of the CCW to enhance our understanding of this complex and multifaceted issue. As we stated during the last meeting, CCW is the right fora since it looks for a balance among humanitarian actions and military utility.

United Kingdom

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁶⁴

The CCW is the right forum for this issue. The UK has worked to further discussion. We hosted a 3-day weapons review forum to encourage discussion of good practice on Article 36. The UK is sponsoring research into the wider applications of artificial intelligence to consider ethical and legal implications. We're happy to share research. It is designed to broaden understanding of future conflicts and not promote the development of weapons. The UK has not changed its position: we believe that such systems do not and might never exist. The UK does not plan to ever develop them. Further work is necessary in the area, but we are not convinced of the value of different guidelines or regulations. Existing IHL is sufficient. Also unconvinced of need to move now to a formal Group of Governmental Experts. We need further discussion at the informal level so propose that the CCW to convene further informal meeting in 2016.

United States

General Exchange of Views⁶⁵

The United States has been a strong supporter of the decision by the HCPs to adopt the mandate to discuss LAWS. We continue to believe that CCW, an IHL forum with its mix of policy, military and technical experts, is the right venue to consider this complex and important topic. This subject requires the in depth discussions we have seen at our first two meetings of experts, and we strongly support continuing these discussions next year. We were pleased with the level of participation in the informal meeting of experts but it is clear that this discussion is still in the early stages 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 2016 that should include no less than 5 days of discussion.

As we have said, it is premature to decide where these discussions might or should ultimately lead, but it is important that our work move forward and build upon what was accomplished in 2014 and 2015. We must continue to delve deeper into the issues surrounding LAWS. The United States believes that one important area that deserves our increased attention next year is how states

⁶³ Statement of Turkey, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.
[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/1894073693381FDBC1257F0F003B2066/\\$file/turkey.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/1894073693381FDBC1257F0F003B2066/$file/turkey.pdf)

⁶⁴ Intervention of UK, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁶⁵ Statement of US, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/FF19585DF8C9D410C1257F0F003B6702/\\$file/usa.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/FF19585DF8C9D410C1257F0F003B6702/$file/usa.pdf)

evaluate new weapons systems such as LAWS. As we stated in April, 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 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.

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁶⁶

The purpose is to discuss emerging technologies as there is broad agreement that lethal autonomous weapon systems do not exist. We are not referring to remotely piloted drones, nor precision-guided munitions or defensive systems. During discussions, we have acknowledged this is a complex issue. The DoD policy on autonomy in weapons neither encourages nor prohibits the development of LAWS. It requires high-level approval before development and fielding of AWS. We see three areas of work for 2016. First, there is a need for more work to achieve a common understanding on what mean by LAWS as there are divergent views on what is being addressed. Some tried to conflate LAWS with remotely controlled aircraft. Are we only discussing weapons with artificial intelligence (AI) or something broader? Second, we need to define human-machine interaction and focus on the phrase meaningful human control. We've heard many delegates say they don't know what it means. The phrase leaves much room for interpretation. We are concerned that meaningful human control can be read as too narrow and tantamount to ban on LAWS. It is premature to consider the call for a ban on LAWS. Don't want too narrow definitions. Other definitions are likewise too narrow, and miss role of humans. It is more appropriate to talk about levels of human judgment and we should discuss it in 2016. Third, on weapons reviews we'd like to focus on this work as an interim step to achieve an interim outcome document that sets out what is entailed by weapons review to assist states in their review of LAWS. This wouldn't endorse the development of LAWS, but would encourage state to conduct weapons reviews. It would promote sufficiency and quality of weapons reviews. The US is supportive of additional time to discuss this issue in the CCW. Important to further increase our understanding instead of reaching decisions or deciding the outcome.

Zambia

General Exchange of Views⁶⁷

Regarding the subject of lethal autonomous weapon systems, Zambia still advocates for further discussions in corroboration with other stakeholders for better understanding of the subject before focusing on the way forward. Zambia looks forward to hearing more on the subject this afternoon and would consider commenting should need be, although our position remains as submitted during the meeting [of] experts this year in April.

Zimbabwe

General Exchange of Views⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Intervention of US, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

⁶⁷ Statement of Zambia, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

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⁶⁸ Statement of Zimbabwe, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

Although Zimbabwe is not yet party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), my delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in the debate on the issues at hand. We hope our participation will advance the current discussions, especially on “lethal autonomous weapon systems” or LAWS. Earlier this year in April, we listened and followed from the side-lines, when many delegations and experts engaged in a very stimulating exchange of views on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies, and the deployment of such technologies in combat situations. As we celebrate the many peaceful or civilian benefits that automation and technology bring into our daily lives, my delegation is equally concerned by development of lethal autonomous weapon systems and their eventual deployment in military combat to destroy human life. In situations where autonomous weapons systems are deployed to select and engage human targets in armed conflict, my delegation holds the view that there is a need to maintain meaningful human control to ensure full observance of international humanitarian law.

In so far as fully automated weapon systems do not respond to a number of our concerns and questions, we prefer to err on the side of caution. Clearly, humanity has not evolved to such a stage where it is acceptable that the decision to take life in a war situation is made by a machine. In fact we hope that time never comes. A time when fully automated machines will be deployed in war and determine their targets. For we ask, how will these systems determine these targets? Who will be accountable for violations of international humanitarian law? Who will be criminally liable for war crimes, where such crimes are committed by fully automated machines? Of course one could argue that overall responsibility lies with the military commanders who make the decisions to deploy such weapons. However, this is a whole new and complex area we are entering, which will be very difficult to fathom as far as international humanitarian law is concerned. Consider that, unmanned aerial military vehicles, most commonly referred to as “drones,” which are remotely-controlled by human operators, are already wreaking havoc on civilians and the environment. This, completely autonomous weapon systems can only be much worse on the accountability scale. These are, some of the many questions for which we have no answers. In the absence of such answers, my delegation is of the view that we should maintain meaningful human control over military weapons or weapons with a dual use. Until we get satisfactory answers to these ethical, moral, and legal questions, we will remain uncomfortable with the potential scenario where decisions over human life and death are ceded to machines however artificially intelligent, which have neither feelings, human judgment, nor empathy and which have no sense of proportionality or force and distinction between military and civilian targets.

We can't pretend that lethal autonomous weapon systems are still too far way into the future for the current generations to be concerned about them. Nor can we ignore the fact impact that remotely controlled weapons such as drones are having on innocent civilians in the countries where they are deployed. We think that this debate is useful if it helps educate, inform, and galvanise public and international opinion against the deployment and use of such weapons in armed conflict. We have been caught napping before, and if past experience can be our guide for the future, we join like-minded delegations in calling for pre-emptive ban on lethal autonomous weapon systems. My delegation believes the time to act on this issue is now and that it is imperative to avoid a situation where a pre-emptive ban becomes a moot point. In taking the stance to ban the production and use of LAWS, my delegation is of course under no illusion that those amongst us who already enjoy a distinct advantage in terms of the deployment of such military assets will readily give up such an advantage. We, however, see both merit and wisdom in doing what is right and necessary

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/842EF3CB3B61A2FBC1257F0F003B9521/\\$file/zimbabwe.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/842EF3CB3B61A2FBC1257F0F003B9521/$file/zimbabwe.pdf)

to safeguard this and future generations from the wanton and mindless ravages that lethal autonomous weapon systems can bring upon humanity.

European Union

General Exchange of Views⁶⁹

We welcome the productive meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in April this year, which continued the discussions initiated by France in 2014. We thank Germany and Ambassador Biontino in particular for leading the 2015 discussions. The meetings of experts over the last two years brought forward the most relevant expertise in addressing this complex issue from the legal, ethical, technical, and operational perspectives. We value also highly the interaction with civil society and its important contribution in the debate. Important questions though remain and we welcome a continued discussion of this topic in the CCW to further increase our common understandings, bearing also in mind the 2016 Review Conference.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems⁷⁰

UNIDIR described its work on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies, which started in 2013 and is focused on helping to advance multilateral discussion. Building upon the success of Phase I, this year UNIDIR launched the second phase of the project with support from Canada, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands. Its primary aim remains the same: to help policy-makers to better consider and make informed decisions about autonomy in weapon systems. Phase II of the project will particularly highlight cross-disciplinary topics, where the critical issues require discussion and consideration beyond the traditional CCW stakeholders, such as the private sector, scientists involved in R&D, and experts from other relevant academic disciplines. UNIDIR's most recent report is on the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies in the maritime environment, entitled Testing the Waters.

International Committee of the Red Cross

General Exchange of Views⁷¹

In addition to autonomous weapon systems, which the ICRC will address in the session dedicated to this topic, there are a number of issues and themes which, in the view of the ICRC, merit the consideration of the Fifth Review Conference. The ICRC welcomes the wide recognition, notably in the discussions on autonomous weapon systems, of the need to carry out thorough reviews of new weapons, which is a legal requirement at least for States party to Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. Weapons reviews must assess the legality of new weapons under IHL rules as well as their acceptability under the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience (the Martens Clause). In 2006, the Third Review Conference of the CCW urged States that do not already do so to conduct legal reviews of new weapons, means or methods of warfare. The Fifth

⁶⁹ Statement of the EU and its member states, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015.

⁷⁰ Intervention of UNIDIR, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/13Nov_UNIDIR.pdf

⁷¹ Statement of ICRC, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 12 November 2015. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/12Nov_ICRC.pdf

Review Conference next year presents the opportunity for States to consider the importance of carrying out timely legal reviews of newly developed or acquired weapons, which are essential to preventing the deployment of weapons “which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects”, in the words of the Convention’s title.

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)⁷²

The two CCW meetings of experts on autonomous weapon systems (held in 2014 and 2015) have underscored the significant legal, ethical and societal questions raised by weapon systems that are capable of independently selecting and attacking targets without human intervention. They also reflected broad agreement that human control must be retained over the operation of such systems, whether for legal, ethical or policy reasons. Discussions in the CCW next year should focus on what constitutes meaningful, appropriate or effective human control over autonomy in the critical functions of weapon systems to ensure that they can be used in accordance with IHL and, critically, within the bounds of what is acceptable under the dictates of public conscience.

The removal of human control over weapon systems is not a distant concern but an approaching reality. Some existing weapon systems already have limited autonomy in their critical functions, and the field of military robotics is developing very rapidly. In this respect, the ICRC urges States Parties to refine the CCW’s mandate on autonomous weapon systems to tackle the questions raised by real-world weapon systems. The work must move from the theoretical to the practical and, as the ICRC has previously suggested, a useful starting point would be to examine weapon systems with autonomy in their critical functions that are currently in use or being developed. These include, among others: missile and rocket defence weapons with autonomous modes, autonomous loitering munitions, vehicle ‘active protection’ weapons with autonomous modes, anti-personnel ‘sentry’ weapons with autonomous modes, and underwater weapon systems that operate autonomously.

As we stated yesterday, the ICRC welcomes the wide recognition by States Parties, in the context of discussions on autonomous weapon systems, of the importance of carrying out reviews of new weapons at the national level, to prevent the development of illegal or otherwise unacceptable weapon systems. However, as the ICRC emphasized in past CCW discussions on “LAWS”, these weapons raise profound ethical and societal questions about the role of humans in the use of force, and in particular in the taking of human life, questions which have profound implications for the future of warfare, and indeed for humanity. Such fundamental questions cannot be left solely to national weapon reviews, and discussions in the CCW must have as an objective to achieve common ground among States on where to fix the limits on autonomy in the critical functions of weapon systems. The ICRC wishes to stress that both national legal reviews of new weapons, and discussions at the international level (in particular those taking place here in the CCW) are mutually reinforcing. The work of the CCW on autonomous weapon systems can inform national legal reviews of new weapons with autonomy in their critical functions, and vice-versa. In this respect, the ICRC has been calling on States that have carried out legal and policy reviews of weapons with autonomy in their critical functions to share their experiences, which could help to guide CCW discussions.

Some continue to argue that the faithful implementation of IHL’s general rules, including through the legal reviews of new weapons, should be sufficient to address any concerns regarding

⁷² Intervention of ICRC, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/13Nov_ICRC.pdf

autonomy in the critical functions of weapon systems. However, history has shown that when using certain weapons, the specific characteristics of the weapon, combined with the inconsistent application of existing rules of IHL to that weapon, may reveal a need to clarify the law and ultimately to develop weapon-specific rules. Regarding autonomous weapon systems in particular, leaving it up to each State to determine the lawfulness and acceptability of the specific autonomous weapon systems they are developing or acquiring may risk inconsistent outcomes; with, for example some States applying limits to the use of such systems and some States prohibiting their use altogether. This again underscores the importance of States sharing information about their legal and policy reviews of their new weapon systems which have autonomy in their critical functions, with the aim of facilitating understandings on the legal and ethical issues posed by autonomous weapon systems.

Finally, we invite delegations to consult the ICRC's consolidated reading of the definitional, legal and ethical issues raised by autonomous weapon systems, contained in its report submitted to the forthcoming 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts (available at <http://rcrcconference.org/international-conference/documents/>). Thank you.

Article 36

General Exchange of Views

We are encouraged that states look set to continue and hopefully intensify and focus their work to address the concerns related to autonomous weapons. Although such systems are sometimes portrayed as a distant prospect, this topic should instead be an urgent priority for humanity. The increasing use of armed drones, for example, is already facilitating a seemingly limitless expansion of the area of military operations. We are pleased that the concept of meaningful human control has acquired widespread currency within the international debate on autonomous weapons. There is a general recognition that such control is required for an attack. In our view, this general recognition should be explicitly articulated in international law. We are confident that a thoughtful and proper consideration of this concept will lead responsible states to the prohibition of systems operating beyond meaningful human control. Along with other members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, we believe that a focused set of discussions is required on lethal autonomous weapons systems and a Group of Governmental Experts would be one useful forum for this in 2016.

Session on lethal autonomous weapons systems

Overall we feel it is clear from the debate this morning and yesterday that lethal autonomous weapons systems are a significant problem for the international community – that is why the treaty body tasked with restricting and prohibiting weapons systems is discussing them. We are encouraged with the discussion on meaningful human control. We are a bit surprised though that some states are concerned this concept is somehow vague. Some of the statements that this is vague or narrow concept are also accompanied by statements that weapons will always be under human control. States should be able to explain how they ensure this human control over their weapons and what the right level of human control they require.

Human Rights Watch

General Exchange of Views

Human Rights Watch is a co-founder of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, and Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch is the global coordinator of the campaign. We believe that the only viable

solution to the multitude of dangers posed by these weapons is a preemptive prohibition on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Partial regulations or restrictions will not work. Existing international humanitarian law (IHL) will not be sufficient. Legal weapons reviews alone will have no real impact. It is time for the CCW to step-up its work on lethal autonomous weapons systems, to show that it is serious, that it has a sense of urgency, that it is aimed at a concrete outcome, not just more talk. It is time to move from informal to formal status, and to establish an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), one that is inclusive and open to all. Much more time needs to be allocated than just one week. CCW history shows that little gets done at the rate of one week per year.

PAX

[General Exchange of Views](#)

PAX co-founded the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots due to a range of legal, security and operational concerns but first and foremost because of ethical concerns. Ethical considerations are a starting point as well as our overarching chapeau and legal, operational or strategic considerations on autonomous weapons can and should always be seen in conjunction with ethics and morality. Because in the end if you discuss weapons that once activated select and attack targets without meaningful control, human dignity is at stake. Dignity of the military, civilians and the people in whose name they will be used. We now expect to have a structured and constructive debate within both the political and public sphere in the Netherlands. We urge other states to consider undertaking similar initiatives to get more clarity on this issue and establish national policy on autonomous weapons. We need a forward-looking precautionary approach on the emerging technology of autonomous weapons.

WILPF

[General Exchange of Views](#)

WILPF, which is a partner organisation of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, is also gravely concerned at the possibility of weapons that may operate without meaningful human control. Autonomous weapons go beyond remotely-controlled drones, devolving life and death decision-making to software and sensors. There is something especially cynically abhorrent in the idea of human beings assigning the killing of other human beings to a technological creation. A preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons is necessary to ensure the retention of meaningful human control over targeting and attack decisions. We welcome the fact that governments have started to discuss this issue at the international level. We encourage delegations here at this meeting to establish an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts in 2016 to explore the concept of meaningful human control and begin work for the negotiation of a legally-binding instrument prohibiting autonomous weapons. The development of such technology is not inevitable. It is the culture of militarism, emboldened by profits and power, which drives us in that direction. We can and must challenge that culture. To do so, we must also challenge the culture of patriarchy.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)⁷³

⁷³ Intervention of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

Thank you for this opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, which I coordinate. The campaign is a global coalition of more than 55 non-governmental organizations active in more than two-dozen countries. We call for a preemptive ban on weapons that would select targets and use of force without further human intervention. We have a couple of comments on format and then on substance for this session on what the Convention on Conventional Weapons should do about lethal autonomous weapons systems next year.

On format, we'd like to see states do more than just tread water, so we are calling for the establishment of an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts to step-up the deliberations. This would allow for more substantive deliberations over a longer period of time in 2016. As it stands, one week of talks per year is insufficient to tackle the multiple concerns that have been raised with autonomous weapons. Such a Group of Governmental Experts would be open to all states and registered NGOs thereby ensuring an inclusive process. By our count approximately 65 states have elaborated their views on autonomous weapons and we welcome those contributions, but need to hear from every state on this topic. We urge all states to participate and contribute to these international deliberations.

Ideally, the Group of Governmental Experts should lay the groundwork that would allow states to adopt a mandate at the Fifth Review Conference the Convention on Conventional Weapons in December 2016 to begin formal negotiations that—in our view—should be aimed at preemptively banning weapons that lack meaningful human control of their targeting and attack decisions. Such negotiations should aim to conclude within a year or two.

In terms of key issues to discuss next year, we urge that the concept of meaningful human control be at the center of deliberations as our co-founder Article 36 has just suggested. We urge you to retain deliberations on ethical aspects of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Discuss compliance with international humanitarian law but do not forget to consider human rights law. Look at the relevance of the Martens Clause and how the dictates of the public conscience applies to these weapons. As others have requested, consider proliferation and threats to regional and international security. Finally, address dual use technologies to ensure a prohibition on autonomous weapons does not inhibit useful civilian and military applications of artificial intelligence.

To conclude, it is time for states to be more ambitious and commit to an outcome-oriented mandate of work in 2016. Our Campaign to Stop Killer Robots stands ready to participate and assist with your deliberations next year.

Open Roboethics Initiative

[Session on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)⁷⁴

The Open Robotics Initiative is a think tank founded in Canada in 2012 that takes stakeholder approaches to investigating roboethics issues. We would like to share some key findings from a [public opinion survey](#) it conducted this year on the topic of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We believe you will find it useful, especially in considering the Maartens Clause that underscores the public's role in these discussions. Our survey was launched in 14 languages and has attracted over 1,000 responses from 54 countries. We asked six questions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) to determine public opinion on the ethics and governance of LAWS: “The results indicate that our survey participants are reluctant to endorse the development and use of LAWS

⁷⁴ Intervention of Open Robotics Initiative, Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties, Geneva, 13 November 2015. Notes by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2015/MSP/statements/13Nov_ORI.pdf

for waging war.” Most support for the particularly principled reasoning that humans not machines should always make life and death decisions. A brief summary of their results includes survey participants favoring that “all types of LAWS should be internationally banned (67%), [and] LAWS should not be developed or used (56%).”

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Annex II: UNGA Country Statements

UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security October-November 2015

Austria, 13 October

Another matter of concern for my country is the prospect of development of lethal autonomous weapons systems. While this may seem a distant threat, technological innovation is moving fast. We risk crossing a very dangerous threshold. We should be very careful to make sure that the use of such weapon systems is consistent with ethical, political and legal imperatives. Therefore Austria advocates a deepening and intensifying of the ongoing international debate and the setting up of a GGE (Group of Governmental Experts).

Austria, 26 October

Before I conclude, let me put on record here one more concern of my country. This is the prospect of development of lethal autonomous weapons systems. While this may seem a more distant threat in comparison with those just mentioned, technological innovation is moving fast. We risk crossing a very dangerous threshold with these technological developments. We should be very careful to make sure that the application of such technology is consistent with ethical, political and legal imperatives. That is why we are with those who are in favor of not only continuing, but deepening and intensifying the ongoing international debate about lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Botswana, 27 October

My delegation acknowledges the necessity for nations to possess conventional arms for legitimate protection of their territories, interests and maintenance of global peace and stability. We are, however, concerned that such weapons are deadly as they cause pain and suffering with far-reaching consequences. Recent developments such as use of armed unmanned air vehicles and autonomous weaponry further compound this problem. It is doubtful if the use of these weapons meets standards of public international law, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and international human rights law. We, however, welcome the discussions concerning these emerging challenges

China, 9 October

It is important to properly address the challenges brought about as a result of new technology developments to the international arms control process. Progress in science and technology have indeed benefited mankind, but its military application has, in the meantime, posed immense potential risks and threats to the security and even the survival of mankind. The international community should adhere to the principle of security for all, abandon the practice of pursuing absolute military advantage, carry out preventive diplomacy, check the emerging arms race in the hi-tech field, and safeguard international peace and stability.

China, 26 October

China is concerned with lethal autonomous weapons. International law should apply.- Notes by Reaching Critical Will

Costa Rica, 27 October

Major ethical, legal and technical concerns have been expressed since 2013 regarding autonomous lethal weapons. Two years later, while many questions have been answered on this topic, many have been left unaddressed. Costa Rica agrees with other delegations in the need to define what is meant by “significant human control.” We also support the establishment of a group of government experts, GGE, to provide recommendations of the steps to follow, and what can be taken into account for next year’s Review Conference.

Croatia, 26 October

We remain fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five Protocols. CCW is a valuable multilateral instrument that offers a credible platform to discuss both on-going issues as well as emerging ones. Croatia would like to see continuation of discussions on the issue of LAWS within the framework of the CCW in 2016 with a strengthened mandate. This topic is not so new anymore, it has been discussed thoroughly in the two informal meetings of experts in the CCW over the past two years, but in our view that is not enough. These meetings only proved that there is need for us to have more talks. We need more answers, more conclusions and, ultimately, some decisions need to be made regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems. Also, it is our belief that this process should include all the relevant minds and voices and they should collaborate closely. It is of outmost importance to have at the table, together with diplomats, scientists, academia, military, civil society, industry and all the other experts that can contribute.

Cuba, 26 October

Cuba attaches high priority to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons for its important contribution to the development of International Humanitarian Law standards and proper attention given to the security interests of its States Parties. ... We favor the adoption of a legally binding instrument under United Nations or the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to prohibit autonomous weapons before they are used. We have serious doubts that the use of lethal autonomous systems weapons can ensure compliance and enforcement of the rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law. - Google translation

Czech Republic, 26 October

The Czech Republic reiterates its strong support for the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Universality of the CCW and its Protocols remains one of the highest priorities. ... The Czech Republic welcomes new drive in the discussion on autonomous weapons systems. We believe that the international community must establish a shared set of international norms on how autonomous weapons systems must perform in order to comply with international humanitarian law and other relevant legal regimes as the technology continues to develop.

Ecuador, 26 October

My country believes that the international community should deepen the debate about armed UAVs and fully autonomous armed robots . The high casualty rate from the indiscriminate use of drones in civilian areas and use for extrajudicial executions. Legal questions are created by the development of new technologies that exclude human responsibility for decision making. This makes it urgent that serious discussion of these new problems in the field of conventional weapons be addressed. In this sense, my delegation supports the need to deepen the debate in preparation

for the next review conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 2016, during which states should consider banning lethal autonomous weapons. Meanwhile, states should refrain from developing these weapons.

Original - Mi país considera que la comunidad internacional debe profundizar el debate alrededor de los Vehículos aéreos armados no tripulados y de los robots armados totalmente autónomos. El alto número de víctimas indiscriminadas que el uso de drones en zonas civiles ha causado y su utilización para ejecuciones extrajudiciales, así como las serias interrogantes éticas y jurídicas provocadas por el desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías bélicas que excluyen la participación y responsabilidad de los seres humanos en la toma de decisiones, hace urgente una discusión seria sobre estos nuevos problemas en el campo de las armas convencionales. En este sentido, mi delegación apoya la necesidad de profundizar este debate en preparación de la próxima Conferencia de Examen de la Convención sobre ciertas armas convencionales en 2016, durante la cual se debería considerar prohibir las armas letales autónomas. Mientras tanto, los Estados deberían abstenerse de desarrollar estas armas.

France, 13 October

Finally, we have the responsibility of anticipating the future. This is indeed the purpose of the initiative led by France on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The interest generated by this debate, among both our governments and civil society, and the expertise that has already been mobilized to identify all the implications, demonstrate that this subject was worth addressing. We need to have an attentive and rigorous understanding of this phenomenon in order to foster the broadest possible convergence of views. The high-quality work conducted in 2015 in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) showed that this forum was an entirely relevant place to address all the complex dimensions of the subject. It is in this context, and bearing in mind the CCW review conference in 2016, that France will continue to contribute to the work on LAWS.

France, 26 October

In 2015, within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we continued the discussions on Lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) that France initiated in 2014. This is a forward-looking topic that concerns us all. It requires in-depth consideration by the international community, supported by experts and civil society. Lethal autonomous weapons systems raise very practical technical, ethical, legal and operational issues. The debates that took place in 2014 and 2015 showed that the CCW was capable of addressing issues of the future. The discussions need to continue at the CCW in 2016, bearing in mind the Review Conference that will take place in November.

Germany, 9 October

Let me address an emerging issue of great importance: Lethal autonomous weapons systems. Given the speed of technological progress, it is high time to take this issue seriously. There is a common understanding that machines should not be allowed to take life-and-death decisions without human intervention. Germany stands ready to shoulder further responsibilities in order to advance the discussions within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

India, 26 October

India is party to the CCW and its five Protocols and remains committed to the CCW objective of progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian law while striking a balance between addressing humanitarian concerns and military necessity of States. India will contribute to the success of the CCW meetings this year and the Review Conference next year. ... India supports continued discussions in the CCW on lethal autonomous weapons Systems (LAWS) as per an agreed mandate. 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.

Ireland, 14 October

As technology evolves, so too do the challenges of ensuring that the use of weapons and new technologies, both within and outside conflict situations, remains within the boundaries of international law. Ireland has been pleased to take part in the discussion of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems at the CCW. We support a strengthened mandate for the CCW to work on and explore this serious emerging challenge for conventional arms control, with a view to positions for the CCW Review Conference in 2016.

Ireland, 26 October

The mandate of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols is at the heart of our debate on how to control and regulate the use of conventional weapons. Again, we would urge all States to accede to the Convention and to its protocols. We are encouraged by the active consideration which has been given to the question of Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems at the CCW. We support a strengthened mandate for the CCW to explore this serious emerging challenge for conventional arms control, as recognised by the many side events and briefings on this issue convened during our session. Ireland supports the establishment of an open ended working group on this issue, which could prepare for the CCW Review Conference in 2016.

Israel, 26 October

Israel considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) an important instrument and the right forum for discussing many challenges on the conventional sphere, as it strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of international humanitarian law (IHL). 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 held in April, as well as the continued work on IEDs and looks forward to further work on these two issues. The issue of LAWS needs to be further explored, from both technical and legal aspects, inter alia, defining what is an "Autonomous Weapon System" and what is meant by the term "Meaningful Human Control". In the run up to next year's Review Conference it is important to engage in meaningful and substantive discussions and Israel is committed to doing so.

Italy, 26 October

The CCW provides a unique forum to address issues relating to conventional weapons use and IHL. We welcome the CCW discussions on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), whose growing political and humanitarian impact, particularly on civilian populations, is cause for great concern. We also highly appreciate the Meeting of Experts' debates on emerging technologies in the area

of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which started to shed light on the multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects that these involve.

Japan, 26 October

Japan recognizes the growing interest in the international community regarding the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We commend the leadership of Ambassador Biontino of Germany in the second informal meeting of experts, which deepened our understanding on this issue through an interactive exchange of views. Japan supports further discussion in the Fifth CCW Review Conference in 2016 for further deepening our understanding of the main elements including the definition of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

South Korea, 26 October

The Republic of Korea is committed to universalisation of the Convention on Conventional Weapons as well as the Arms Trade Treaty. It supports international efforts to understand lethal autonomous weapons and supports using the CCW to address lethal autonomous weapons. - Notes by Reaching Critical Will

Kuwait, 26 October

Lethal autonomous robots have grave human security implications. Artificial technology relative to these weapons must be monitored and reviewed. - Notes by Reaching Critical Will

Lebanon, 12 October

The world is facing today challenges to commitments made 70 years ago, from armed drones, to autonomous weapons to cyberspace and outer space activities, we should not forget the values upon which these commitments were made. Human rights and International Humanitarian Law should remain our guiding principles and universality and inclusiveness the framework to regulate any action.

Mexico, 26 October

Mexico is a strong promoter of the principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and its intrinsic characteristics of weapons that cause indiscriminate, unnecessary and inhumane suffering shall be prohibited and eliminated. While it is recognizing that there are no fully autonomous armaments yet, technology is moving in that direction and the issue has been central to discussions on the modernization of weapons, ethics in the protection of civilians and respect for the International Humanitarian Law (IHL). For Mexico, in principle, autonomous weapons are not capable of ensuring the application of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, so would be prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate the development and use of these weapons, before there is the possibility they will be used indiscriminately.

Original - Mexico es un firme promotor de que las armas contrarias a los principios de Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH) y que por sus características intrínsecas causan daños indiscriminados, superfluos e inhumanos, deben ser prohibidas y eliminadas. Si bien se reconoce que aún no existe armamento bélico completamente autónomo, la tecnología se está moviendo en esa dirección y el tema ha sido central en las discusiones sobre la modernización de las armas, la ética en la protección de los civiles y el respeto del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH). Para México, en principio, las armas autónomas, no tienen la capacidad de garantizar la aplicación de

los principios de distincion, proporcionalidad y precaucion, por lo que estarian prohibidas por el Derecho Internacional Humanitario y, por tanto, es necesario regular el desarrollo y el empleo de este tipo de artefactos, antes de que exista la posibilidad de que Sean utilizados de manera indiscriminada.

Netherlands, 9 October

Two years of discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in the CCW have answered some questions on this important subject, but others remain. Also some new questions have been raised. For example we have to further deepen our understanding of what we exactly mean by 'meaningful human control' when we talk about these weapon systems. However, we believe it is time to take our discussions one step further. At the upcoming MSP we would be in favor to establish a GGE that could come up with recommendations for further steps, which could be taken into account at next year's review conference.

Netherlands, 26 October

Two years of discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems have answered some questions, but others remain and new ones were raised. We find it very positive that this is a concerted effort by both states and civil society. One thing is clear: International law and in particular International Humanitarian Law is the framework we should look at with regard to the legality of weapon 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. In this regard, it is important to keep monitoring the technical developments in this field. To make progress, we believe our discussions could focus on deepening our understanding of what we exactly mean by 'meaningful human control'. The Netherlands has started a multiyear research program to develop our own national perspective on this issue. We should also continue to explore if we can agree on a definition of Autonomous Weapon Systems. Finally, we could continue to discuss Article 36 reviews with a view to find common ground on elements of Autonomous Weapon Systems. We believe now is time to take our discussions one step further. At the upcoming MSP we would be in favor to establish a GGE that could come up with recommendations for further steps, which could be taken into account at next year's review conference.

New Zealand, 26 October

We share, too, the concerns of many regarding the complex legal and political challenges posed by the possibility of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). Given the pace of technological advances, the international community must ensure that decision-making and accountability in the development and use of lethal weapon systems remains within the boundaries of international law including, in particular, IHL. With a view to the convening next year of the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we support a strengthened mandate for further work within the CCW on this issue.

Pakistan, 26 October

The development of new types of weapons, such as lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) remains a source of concern for the international community. These weapon systems 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. The

introduction of LAWS would therefore be illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security and would have grave consequences. Therefore, their further development and use must be pre-emptively banned and the states currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and use.

Poland, 12 October

Poland has served as the President of the last year's meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Convention provides a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and to address emerging issues, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems. A forward looking and focused discussion on this issue held in April this year has proved the relevance of the CCW and its ability to tackle this subjects. We welcome the comprehensive report of the Chair of the meeting of experts. We hope that the work on this issue will continue next year. As an outgoing Chair of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, Poland tables the resolution on the CCW in the First Committee. We hope that - as in previous years -the resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Portugal, 14 October

Advancing human security shall be our first and foremost objective. In this regard, we share specific humanitarian, moral and legal concerns related to ongoing developments on a set of the so-called "new era warfare tools", including proliferation of armed drones, lethal autonomous weapons system eventual development, cyberspace aggressive use and, finally, risks of militarization of the outer space. We encourage, as a matter of urgency, the continuation of ongoing international discussions and initiatives on these subjects, both at political and technical levels. These discussions should take into account, in our view, the need to promote transparency and applicable international law or, when needed, the establishment of regulatory multilateral security frameworks responsive to the objective of protecting civilians and Human Rights universal requirements.

Romania, 26 October

We remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. We believe that discussing important issues related to the use of weapons systems and learning from each other's national implementation activities provides a significant and real benefit, including from a humanitarian perspective. In this regard, we see merit in the expert discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons System in the framework of CCW.

South Africa, 26 October

Informal discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) have been taking place within the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) for the last few years. From these informal discussions we have garnered a better understanding of lethal autonomous weapons systems, but many unanswered questions remain. For South Africa, a key question that should be of concern to all of us is whether these new technologies 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. The concept of "meaningful human control" is something that my delegation is supportive of. In our view, there should always be meaningful human control in questions of life and death. It is therefore imperative that we deepen

our understanding of the degree of human oversight or control that “autonomous weapons” – and even those of that are reportedly “semi-autonomous” -- would require.

Sweden, 26 October

Sweden remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols. We very much appreciated the opportunity at the second Expert Meeting in April this year to take a further look at the questions around lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS. As a starting point, Sweden has underlined that humans should not delegate to machines the power to make life-or death decisions. As States, we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we therefore welcome a continued discussion of this issue within the framework of the CCW

Switzerland, 8 October

We welcome the fact that the question of lethal autonomous weapon systems is being addressed within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Thanks to work put in over the past two years, we now have a better grasp of this emerging problem. In this context, continued efforts in this domain are also necessary, notably with a view to specifying how existing mechanisms and standards apply to such weapon systems and to developing initial practical results.

Switzerland, 26 October

While artificial intelligence and robotics present both challenges and opportunities, the possible weaponisation of such technologies (namely Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, or LAWS) raises fundamental ethical, legal, operational and political questions. We welcome the broad consensus among CCW High Contracting Parties as well as among observers that international humanitarian law applies to all weapon systems, including LAWS, and has to be respected in all circumstances. The international community should now focus on the possible development of weapon systems which acquire and attack targets without appropriate human involvement. The dialogue begun in the CCW and other expert meetings on the implementation of legal reviews of new weapons, means and methods of warfare, in accordance with Article 36 of Additional Protocol 1 to the Geneva Conventions and customary international law, is a timely and valuable contribution to addressing the issue of LAWS and is important to ensure compliance with international law. Without prejudice to other topics, in depth discussions on the effective implementation of weapon reviews with regard to LAWS seem warranted. Finally, we believe that the CCW, as an important treaty regulating means and methods of warfare, is the appropriate forum to address the issue of LAWS further. We support a more robust mandate in the CCW, which can lead to concrete results and ensure that the challenge posed by LAWS will be adequately addressed.

Turkey, 26 October

[to come]

United Kingdom, 26 October

Just as its aid focuses on repairing the legacy of past conflicts, the UK is ready and willing to discuss potential future challenges. For that reason the UK took part in the productive informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in April this year at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). We thank Germany, and Ambassador Biontino in particular, for

leading the discussions. This important issue sits well within the remit of the CCW and we support continuing in this vein next year.

United States, 26 October

The United States is a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its Protocols. We view the CCW as an important instrument that has been able to bring together states with diverse national security concerns. In 2015 the High Contracting Parties continued important discussions on improvised explosive devices and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We look forward to the meetings of High Contracting Parties in November and to establishing a robust program of work for 2016 to support preparations for the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW.

Africa Group - delivered by f, 26 October

The African Group seeks to raise the lingering question of autonomous weapons. The manufacture of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) is a threshold that raises ethical, legal, moral and technical issues in relation to international humanitarian and international human rights law.

Arab Group - delivered by Egypt, 26 October

Major technological developments in lethal autonomous weapons is forcing the international disarmament community to give due attention to the challenges and threats emanating from these weapons. It's important to discuss the issue in all its dimensions--legal, humanitarian, military, and moral-- in order to develop restrictions on the use and development of artificial intelligence in autonomous weapons and set boundaries and restrictions on their development, use, and stockpiling.

European Union, 26 October

With a view to strengthening international humanitarian law, the EU and its Member States remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, which provides a unique forum to gather diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and to address emerging issues. We believe that these instruments also constitute an effective means to respond in a flexible way to future developments in the field of weapons technology, and above all, represent an essential part of International Humanitarian Law. ... We welcome the constructive ongoing discussions in the CCW on the technical, ethical, legal, operational and military aspects of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Those exchanges help to lay the ground for a better common understanding of the issue.

Non-Aligned Movement - delivered by Indonesia, 8 October

NAM is of the view that lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) raise a number of ethical, legal, moral and technical, as well as international peace and security related questions which should be thoroughly deliberated and examined in the context of conformity to international law including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In this regard, NAM States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) welcome the informal meeting of CCW experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems held in Geneva from 13-17 April 2015 and support continued deliberations on this issue in the CCW on the basis of an agreed mandate. NAM States Parties to CCW welcome the accession of Algeria and Palestine to the Convention and its annexed protocols.

Nordic States - delivered by Finland, 8 October

The Nordic countries remain strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. The CCW is a forum that brings together expertise from many different fields and enables us to address a wide variety of issues, both long standing and newly emerging. We believe that humans should always bear the ultimate responsibility when dealing with questions of life and death. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we therefore welcome a continued discussion of lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS within the framework of the CCW.

UN Acting High Representative for Disarmament KIM Won-soo, 8 October

In this rapidly evolving world we are becoming ever more dependent on technology. Emerging technologies bring many benefits, but they could also pose challenges to peace and security if we do not prepare ourselves to mitigate the risks. I am concerned there is an institutional and normative vacuum - that the technology is more nimble than we are. The gap between the technological reality and our ability to govern them is growing. We need to find a way to narrow the gap - this is a battle we cannot lose. Our goal must be to ensure the strict application of international law to outer space, to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, to the development of increasingly autonomous weapons and especially to cyberspace.

International Committee of the Red Cross, 16 October

Another area of humanitarian concern is the development of weapon systems that are capable of independently selecting and attacking targets, without human intervention. This concerns a wide range of weapon systems which fall under the umbrella term of autonomous weapon systems, sometimes referred to as "lethal autonomous weapon systems". Discussions of the legal, military and ethical implications of these weapons among government and independent experts in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) have shown that there is broad agreement that human control over the critical functions of weapon systems must be retained. In view of the rapid pace of developments in military robotics, it is now urgent for States to consider what constitutes meaningful, or appropriate or effective, human control over the use of force. The ICRC encourages States to now turn their attention to fixing limits on autonomy in the critical functions of weapon systems, to ensure that they can be used in accordance with IHL and within the bounds of what is acceptable under the dictates of public conscience.

3

Annex III: Media Coverage

In advance of the annual meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and the decision on lethal autonomous weapons systems, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held a press briefing in New York on 20 October 2015 and conducted other media outreach during the 2015 First Committee. This resulted in coverage by [The Guardian](#), [Motherboard](#), [Newsweek](#) and [VICE News](#), among others. There was strong media interest from Australia and internationally in the participation of Toby Walsh in the UN First Committee events with coverage on [7News TV](#), [ABC Radio](#), [Financial Review](#), and a piece in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) that also ran in *The Age*, *Canberra Times* and *Brisbane Times*. Walsh has published several op eds following his [TEDx talk](#) in Berlin, including on [CNN](#) and [TED Ideas](#).

The CCW annual meeting of high contracting parties in Geneva on 12-13 November 2015 attracted some media coverage, notably by PAX New Agency, which ran print and video pieces. Sri Lanka [undertook](#) media outreach and several publications highlighted its role as president of the meeting. Publications by Human Rights Watch, Open Roboethics Initiative, SIPRI, and others issued ahead of the meeting generated some media interest. A post by Amnesty International's listing ten reasons why killer robots should be banned was picked up by publications including *Chicago Sun Times* and *NBC News*. Media also covered the survey conducted by. The CCW period saw publication of 66 articles in English, 11 in French, 10 in German and Spanish, 5 in Vietnamese, 4 in Dutch and Korean, 2 in Czech, Japanese, and Portuguese, and one each in Belarusian, Chinese, Danish, Finnish, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, and Indonesian.

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ANNEX IV - Campaign Delegation List

Convention on Conventional Weapons 2015 meeting of high contracting parties
United Nations Geneva
9-13 November 2015

Article 36

Mr. Richard Moyes
Mr. Thomas Nash

Association for Aid and Relief, Japan

Ms. Natsuki Matsumoto

Facing Finance

Mr. Thomas Küchenmeister

Human Rights Watch

Mr. Steve Goose
Ms. Mary Wareham
Ms. Bonnie Docherty
Ms. Sarah Abraham
Ms. Federica du Pasquier

International Committee for Robot Arms Control

Prof. Noel Sharkey

Mines Action Canada

Mr. Paul Hannon
Ms. Erin Hunt

PAX

Ms. Miriam Struyk

Pax Christi Ireland

Mr. Tony d'Costa

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ms. Ray Acheson
Ms. Mia Gandenberger

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