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UN OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

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REFERENCE:

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Dear Ms. Wareham,

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary-General, dated 22 February. The Secretary-General has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Secretary-General places particular importance on addressing the possible impacts of new technologies on means and methods of warfare, as reflected in the “disarmament for future generations” section of his Disarmament Agenda. In particular, he has taken the strong position that machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement are politically unacceptable, morally repugnant and should be prohibited by international law.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has played a crucial role in bringing public attention to this issue. The efforts of the Campaign and others have also been central in advancing multilateral engagement to address concerns raised by autonomous weapons within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We thank and commend you for this important work.

My Office is working to support the efforts of Member States to elaborate new measures to ensure that humans remain at all times in control over the use of force. Both the Secretary-General and I remain convinced that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons remains the best framework in which to discuss these issues. The Secretary-General and I welcomed the progress made in 2018 by the Group of Governmental Experts, including the recommendation of ten possible guiding principles on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and hope the Group will further build on this work in 2019.

Thank you for providing information about your planned side event during the seventy-fourth session of the First Committee. I have asked my Office to discuss the matter further with you.



Izumi Nakamitsu
Under-Secretary-General
High Representative for
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