



Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Review Conference

Geneva, 12 – 16 December 2016

Intervention on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

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Mr Chairman,

[Firstly, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of Main Committee I and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. We look forward to constructive and fruitful discussions under your able leadership.]

Mr Chairman

Ireland has actively participated in and followed the debates on the issue of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) since 2013.

During that time, we have maintained a consistent position in relation to LAWS. Our belief is that all weapons should remain under meaningful human control and that this principle is critical to the international community's consideration of the questions arising from the development of LAWS.

Notwithstanding our core position, our participation in the debates has demonstrated to us that there is a need for clarity in relation to LAWS, in particular in relation to the elaboration of definitions and the technical characteristics and principles of these weapons systems.

The debate on LAWS also raises fundamental questions about the role of humans in taking lethal decisions during armed conflict. We need to decide under what conditions might the use of LAWS be acceptable, if at all.

We are encouraged by the consideration which has been given to this issue since 2013 by the CCW States Parties and Observers and by our partners in civil society and academia.

This collective effort reached an important milestone at last April's Meeting of Experts, when we agreed to adopt a set of recommendations on LAWS. We feel that the time has now come for the States Parties to implement these recommendations.

In particular Ireland believes that real progress can be made through the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts to consider the salient issues further. We therefore *strongly* endorse this Recommendation and hope that this Review Conference will elaborate and adopt a mandate for a GGE to agree recommendations which would guide future development and use of these weapons systems. These recommendations should, in the first instance, ensure that any development of autonomous weapons systems is fully compliant with the current rules of IHL and International Human Rights Law. The technical aspects of the discussion, and any development of these technologies for use in warfare, should take place against this framework.

The discussions which have taken place on LAWS have also highlighted to us some other important connected issues, which we feel should be explored further.

For instance, Ireland has concerns regarding eventual use of these technologies outside of situations of armed conflict, for example in law enforcement, and as such Ireland sees 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.

[Finally, In addition to advancing the substantive discussion on LAWS, the Fifth Review Conference presents an opportunity for High Contracting Parties to consider the importance of carrying out legal reviews in accordance with Article 36 of Additional Protocol 1, to ensure that all new weapons, means and methods of warfare are not in violation of relevant international law, including international humanitarian law.]

I thank you Mr Chair.