
Check against Delivery

Statement by

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Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons (CCW)

**Consideration of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts
on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal autonomous weapons
systems (GGE on LAWS)**

United Nations, Geneva

16 November 2022

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Israel would like to express its gratitude to Brazil's Ambassador, His Excellency Flávio Soares Damico for his skillful leadership of the GGE. We thank Ambassador Damico as well as his team for promoting in depth discussions based on concrete proposals during both sessions of the GGE as well as during the informal meetings. As we prepare for the discussion on the Report of the 2022 session of the GGE on Emerging Technologies in the Area of LAWS recommendations, please allow us to make a few general comments:

First, Israel would like to reiterate its position that the CCW is the most appropriate forum to deal with emerging technologies in the area of LAWS as it is a unique forum that includes all the most relevant actors and has the potential to have the greatest practical effect on the ground. It is important to remain within the agreed mandate for discussion and stick to the objectives and purposes of the CCW, which seeks to strike a balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations.

The GGE meetings thus far have helped to promote a greater understanding of the various aspects of the issue of LAWS and we believe the sessions this year have allowed us to further deepen our collective understanding. We believe it is important to continue to base our work upon the recommendations and conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts that were reached by consensus, including the 11 Guiding Principles, as well as additional prominent insights from the previous GGE reports.

We note that there seems to be wide agreement on certain notions, such as the notion that existing IHL fully applies to the development and use of LAWS, that weapon systems must be used in accordance with international humanitarian law, , the importance of retaining human responsibility over the use of LAWS, and holding accountable those responsible for IHL violations in accordance with international law.

Mr. Chair,

Another agreement among the High Contracting Parties pertains to that fact that the discussions should not hamper progress in research, development and use of autonomous technologies for peaceful purposes.

The existing mandate continues to enable the High Contracting Parties to make concrete progress in the discussions, while maintaining flexibility, which is crucial due to the futuristic nature of the issue. Due to the fact that technology is continuously changing, it is safe to assume that technology will keep evolving and take different forms in the future. Therefore, incremental progress is the only responsible and realistic way to go.

We call on all High Contracting Parties to actively participate in future GGE discussions and to include relevant experts in their delegations, as this issue requires more and more in-depth expertise.

Mr. Chair,

Concurrently, there are still many issues in which there are still differences of opinion. One of them is the characterization of LAWS. Another issue is the appropriate type and level of human judgment throughout the various phases of the weapon's life cycle, as well as the suitable terminology in this regard.

In addition, there is difference of opinion concerning additional outcomes that could be potentially reached in our forthcoming discussions. In this regard, it is Israel's position that existing IHL suffices in regulating the use of any future weapon system with autonomous capabilities, and that there is no need for a new legally binding instrument.

Looking forward, it seems clear that further in-depth discussions are required, including on human-machine interaction in the various phases of the weapon's life cycle. In our perspective, human judgment will always be an integral part of any process regarding LAWS. LAWS will operate as designed and programmed by humans, and will be another means to effectuate the intention of commanders and operators.

Another specific issue that seems to necessitate further discussions is weapon reviews – a touchpoint that reflects an important avenue of human input, and directly concerns compliance of the weapon with international law.

The research and development of new technologies is progressing at a rapid pace. New and emerging technologies hold great promise for the advancement of human welfare and could help to better protect civilians in conflict in certain circumstances. It is important to keep in mind the military and humanitarian advantages that may be associated with LAWS, both from the operational as well as the legal aspect. These may include better precision in targeting, minimizing collateral damage and reduced risk to combatants and civilians. We believe that these dimensions of LAWS should be further explored.

In conclusion, Israel looks forward to next year's GGE, and hopes that further discussions on this issue will be conducted with a realistic perspective.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.