

**Third Informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS),
Geneva, 11-15 April**

“Towards a working definition of LAWS”

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I would like to welcome Germany's second consecutive chairmanship of the Informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We thank the Chairman for his efforts to advance the understanding of LAWS building upon our previous meetings. Also, we appreciate Germany's initiative of putting forward a well-balanced agenda that combines all essential elements and priorities pursued by the High Contracting Parties.

I would also like to thank the panellists for their very interesting presentations and comments.

Mr. Chairman, Poland supports the continuation of efforts to define LAWS in terms of Meaningful Human Control (MHC). The MHC term constitutes a strong link between each element or area of interest. It has fundamental significance to our discussions, as it introduces the essential precondition in autonomous weapons, namely the presence of significant human control.

We see MHC's versatility when focusing on the military perspective of the autonomous weapon systems. Automation, even if seen as an intermediate step towards full autonomy of the combat systems, does not mean such systems are out of human control. Nowadays, the use of lethal force, which is often referred to as Rules of Engagement, has always a human being behind it. Such is the military understanding of responsibility and accountability, which is a valid approach regardless of the complexity of a given weapon system and the extent of autonomy a commander or a soldier is given.

Also, from the military perspective, it is important to satisfy the need to both introduce the latest technologies into warfare and create environments where humans may be held accountable for their decisions. In our opinion, such a need can be satisfied through exercising Meaningful Human Control (MHC) over the critical functions of LAWS. Therefore, we see rationale in continuing the analysis of LAWS against the concept of Meaningful Human Control where further exploration of such a concept may significantly facilitate the discussion on the definitions.

I have a few questions to the panellists that are related to the MHC concept and the military perspective.

First of all, the MHC concept has been linked to a number of important aspects related to LAWS such as the level of autonomy, International Humanitarian Law or the military perspective. Is meaningful human control just a subjective notion or can it become an objective concept with concrete practical applications? What is the usefulness of other concepts such as “predictability” and “human judgment” and can they be seen as possible alternatives to MHC? Should predictability equally refer to machines and humans? Humans

also have their flaws. Mr. Wallach said that predictability can often fail us. Even sophisticated systems can have deficits in predictability.

Secondly, we know that fully autonomous weapons do not exist yet, but in a highly hypothetical scenario with fully autonomous weapons capable of complying with the main principles of international humanitarian law and deployed into battle would they have a positive role in upholding the rule of law and who would be accountable if failures occurred? In this unusual setting would holding a state, a soldier or a civil servant responsible be the most appropriate solution? So, this brings me to the last question: what scope and level of human control is required in order to call it meaningful?

Thank you Mr. Chairman.