

Japan's views on issues relating to LAWS

- 1 Japan is of the view that Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) should be discussed with a focus on various aspects of technology, ethics, law and military affairs, and that it is not appropriate to draw conclusions from any one of them. We support the approach adopted at the third Informal Meeting of Experts, which proposes detailed agenda items to be discussed based upon the deliberations at the last two Informal Meetings of Experts in 2014 and 2015, with a view to conducting a more policy-oriented debate. Furthermore, Japan considers it important for states parties to bear in mind our past discussions and agree on how to proceed with deliberations on LAWS.
- 2 Japan believes that it is important to clarify the definition of LAWS. During the session entitled "Towards a working definition of LAWS," which is proposed as an agenda item in this Informal Meeting, we expect that discussions on LAWS will lead to establishing its definition or building a common understanding of LAWS.
- 3 It is our understanding that in general, LAWS are a weapon capable of pursuing, without human intervention, autonomous deployment and recovery, identification of a target, judgment/decision of the attack and application of lethal force to the target, specifically a human target, and that such LAWS do not exist at present. The elements, such as "autonomy" and "meaningful human control (MHC)," which were presented at the last two Informal Meetings are instrumental in deliberating the definition of LAWS. Japan intends to express its views on these elements to facilitate discussions during the relevant sessions. The Japan Ministry of Defense has no plan to develop robots with humans out of the loop, which may be capable of committing murder.
- 4 Among various points of discussions on LAWS, the dual-use nature of robotic technologies should be continuously given particular importance. Robotic technologies, which have been extensively used in the areas of industries, disaster responses, healthcare, etc., are bringing tremendous benefits to us all. The development and use of such technologies are expected to expand rapidly. LAWS refers to weapons not robotics in civil use. However, it is assumed that technologies of autonomous systems usable for LAWS have a high affinity with those technologies that have been under research and development in civil use.

Given this assumption, we are concerned that if discussions on how to regulate or prohibit LAWS should be conducted with a focus on relevant technologies, robotics and autonomous technologies in civil use would be covered in the discussions. In deliberations on LAWS, it is important to ensure the promotion, research and development of the peaceful and sound use of robots by drawing on the expertise and experiences gained in other regimes dealing with dual-use technologies.

- 5 Taking into account that the High Contracting Parties acknowledge that LAWS do not exist at present, we believe it is crucial for the Parties to develop a common understanding of LAWS. Should such a common understanding be deepened as a result of discussions from the third Informal Meeting, we believe it is possible to have further advanced discussions. Japan, for its part, will contribute to discussions at this Informal Meeting in a constructive manner.

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