



The 3rd. Meeting of Experts on LAWS

11 April 2016

**Text of speech delivered by Ambassador Piotr Stachańczyk
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland**

Dear Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The Polish delegation participates with great satisfaction in the Third Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems.

We thank Ambassador Biontino for his efforts to further advance our discussion.

We are convinced that the issue of Autonomous Weapon Systems needs constant elaboration in order to better understand the concept and modalities of the future systems.

There are several elements, which - in our opinion - deserve more attention. Let me underline one of them which is foremost the language we use to describe the phenomenon of technical autonomy.

It is important to state that any definition should aim at precisely defining certain object but can also, by its legal provision, influence future development of a given object. This is why we need, already at the very beginning of our analysis, more clarity about what we have in mind when we use the term Autonomous Weapon Systems.

The following question needs to be answered: are we really going to invent and implement fully autonomous weapon systems? If yes, AWS should be a more adequate abbreviation. If not, which is in our view the case, we can discuss further and elaborate more on the concept of the so called “meaningful human control (MHC)”.

However, since fully autonomous weapon system are still not in use it would be difficult at this stage to prejudge what should be the scope of “meaningful human control”. At the same time the actions related to the possible future deployment of such systems would require:

- close monitoring of their development;
- building an expert knowledge for better understanding of the nature of the systems;
- introduction of necessary control, in addition to already existing mechanisms.

Apart from a definition, other issues we find very relevant and which will be tackled during following sessions are compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the ethical aspects.

The potential development and use of LAWS should remain in compliance with international law, in particular with the international humanitarian law.

Poland recalls crucial importance of carrying out legal review in the case of study, development, acquisition or adoption of a new weapon.

Compliance with the fundamental rules and principles of international humanitarian law in the conduct of hostilities, that is distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack, poses formidable challenges, especially as future weapons with autonomy in their critical functions will be assigned more complex tasks and deployed in more dynamic environments than has been the case until now.

We hope, Mr. Chairman, that this year meeting will bring us closer to the comprehension of the essence of the autonomous systems and will be instrumental in specifying their conceptual attribution.

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