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The Third Informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons
Systems to The Convention on Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of
Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)
(11 April 2016, Geneva)

Statement by JAPAN

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me express my appreciation to you for the thorough and transparent preparation of this meeting which will be built on the outcomes of the last two Informal Meetings of Experts in 2014 and 2015. We support the Chairperson's approach to propose detailed agenda items to be discussed based upon the deliberations at the last two Informal Meetings of Experts, with a view to conducting a more policy-oriented debate. We are confident that you will guide the work of this meeting to a successful conclusion. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your endeavors.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to make some general remarks on a couple of key issues related to LAWS, in which Japan has particular interests.

Firstly, Japan believes that our discussion should be based on the knowledge and assessment of the current state of play with regard to research and development of autonomous functions, both in the military and civilian spheres, including specific case studies of maritime, aerial and terrestrial autonomous systems. With a proper understanding of the current situation, we can identify challenges to be tackled with regard to the issues of LAWS in a more concrete manner. In this regard, we hope that the "Mapping Autonomy" session of the meeting will provide us with due perspectives.

Secondly, Japan would like to reiterate that it is important to clarify the definition of LAWS. During the session entitled "Towards a working definition of LAWS," we expect that discussions on LAWS will lead

towards establishing its definition or building a common understanding. Japan is willing to engage in such discussions in a constructive manner.

It is our understanding that in general, LAWS are weapons capable of selecting the battlefield, targeting and killing the human target without human intervention and that 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.

In this regard, the Government of Japan has no plan to develop robots with humans out of the loop, which may be capable of killing indiscriminately.

Thirdly, Japan would like to re-emphasize that we should continue to attach particular importance to the dual-use nature of robotic technologies. It is known that robotic technologies, which have been extensively used in the areas of industries, disaster relief, and healthcare, bring tremendous benefits to us all. The development and use of such technologies are expected to expand rapidly. As LAWS refer to weapons and not robotics in civil use, discussions on how to regulate or prohibit LAWS should not focus on relevant technologies, robotics, and autonomous technologies in civil use. 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. Japan also recognizes that LAWS do not mean to refer to robotics in civil use, but it is not easy to decide where to draw the line between technical components enabling autonomy in civil applications and those in military use due to dual-use nature.

Mr. Chairperson,

Fourthly, 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 the deliberations at the third Informal Meeting, we believe it is possible to engage in further considerations. Japan, for its part, will actively contribute to discussions at this Informal Meeting in a constructive manner.

Finally, let me express my sincere hope that the meeting will turn out to be most fruitful and insightful. Japan looks forward to the substantive discussions throughout this week.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.