



**CCW Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
Geneva (11-15 April 2016)**

**Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

General exchange of views

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all congratulate you on your appointment, and thank you for all your efforts in preparing the ground for a successful third Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Italy attaches great importance to this exercise and I assure you that you can rely on the full cooperation and support of my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy has often underlined how the CCW represents a unique forum and a key instrument for the protection and promotion of International Humanitarian Law. Its inclusion of diplomatic, legal, and military expertise, as well as openness to the active contribution of specialized institutions and civil society organizations, make it particularly effective in addressing not only concerns posed by existing weapon systems, but also those potentially stemming from new and emerging weapons technologies.

From the very start, therefore, we have considered the CCW as the natural forum to explore the features and implications of LAWS. The meetings held in 2014 and 2015 were very effective in this regard. They set the framework of the debate, identifying the multiple aspects involved in this complex issue, and allowed us to engage in in-depth and productive exchanges of views. Furthermore, they have triggered domestic debates on relevant subjects.

Indeed, Italy has started an in-depth inter-agency analysis on LAWS, which also involves representatives from the private sector industry and is set to continue for some time. Such a review process takes account of the reflections and knowledge emerged during the meetings of the Group of Experts and, in return, aims to elaborate and provide a valid contribution to discussions in the CCW framework.

In this regard, let me anticipate that Italy, in cooperation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law of Sanremo and the ICRC, intends to organize a round table on “Weapons and the International Rule of Law” to be held next September. The event will be devoted, inter alia, to the “legal review of new weapons” and will be attended by academics, experts, and diplomats. We are confident that the outcome of this round table will offer useful guidance for our upcoming work in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

This consideration brings me to the procedural issue. We are all aware that one of this week’s outcomes could be the adoption of consensus recommendations to be presented to the upcoming Review Conference, concerning how to advance our work on LAWS. In our view, such an outcome would be per se a very positive development for our discussion. In order to advance in this direction, we are ready to engage in this week’s debate, fully cooperating with you, Mr. Chair, and working constructively with the other delegations.

Let me reiterate once again that Italy supports the CCW’s continued involvement on this issue, in an open format, in which all interested States Parties can participate.

As for the Group of Governmental Experts, mentioned by other delegations, should it be established, we would prefer, at this stage, a mandate to continue our discussion, with a view to advancing a common understanding, as suggested by the current status of the international and domestic debate, which is also linked to the evolving status of civil, as well military, autonomous technologies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman