

**Informal meeting of experts 2015 on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems**

**Concluding remarks**

**Finland**

Mr. Chairman,

First of all let me thank you Ambassador Biontino, your team and all the panelists for your dedicated work in taking forward the important issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Also the comprehensive research of UNIDIR and other organisations have provided us with useful food for thought. We consider the discussions so far have been useful in setting the scene for the future work and deliberations on LAWS. The CCW has proven to be a suitable forum and in our view for the future discussions as well.

In Finland we have started our internal processes to discuss the issue at hand and have also incorporated experts from technical, legal and political background into discussions for the benefit of developing our national positions further. This internal work will continue drawing from the discussions here. Our aim is in the coming months to continue developing our national thinking from all aspects, including technical, legal, ethical and operational. We have equally engaged civil society and academia in our national discussions and their input is highly valued.

On the basis of the valuable comments heard in this meeting room we have been able to reach a more common understanding on many issues that might pave way to some even more focused discussions bearing in mind the coming Review Conference in 2016. We have also gained better understanding of the vast spectrum of particular aspects and questions involved in LAWS.

The discussions have demonstrated the complexity of the issue. What especially makes LAWS a challenging issue is the fact that we are discussing characteristics of a system instead of a particular clearly defined weapon. This makes the discussion uniquely distinct from any other discussion on the disarmament fora. When thinking about LAWS we are in fact discussing whether autonomy may be used within a specific task namely using lethal force.

Since the issue of LAWS is so multifaceted, we will need some clearly defined definitions at some stage. Compared with last year's deliberations it seems that in this year's deliberations the concept of Meaningful Human Control proved not to be as clear a concept as we had originally thought. It remains to be seen if this concept would serve future discussions in a way that would help us in clearly defining LAWS.

As we are also speaking about special characteristics of a system that has not yet been developed we are inevitably facing a situation where speculation still plays a major role. Taking into consideration the

rapid technological development it is almost impossible to foresee how technology will evolve in the coming decades and how this technology will be used. Thus it is impossible to say with certainty whether future systems could fully comply with IHL. Instead of speculating how technology will evolve in the future, it might be better to concentrate on certain critical functions or how the interaction between the system and humans would be addressed.

We should be asking ourselves what is left when we strip the speculations away from the discussions. What we will be left with is not the question whether LAWS can comply with IHL or not. Based on our moral and ethical considerations we will rather have to address the fundamental questions on whether we want an autonomous weapon to become a reality or not.

As High Contracting Parties to the CCW, it is our responsibility and obligation to protect current and future generations from excessive harm. But whether this is best done by banning or by allowing the development of LAWS is not a simple question. Human beings are not perfect, we make mistakes and our judgment can be easily affected. At the same time it is also fair to assume that machines, as human creations, are subject to flaws and imperfections as well. The question is really whether we foresee that human kind will cause less harm to itself and coming generations by relying on machines or relying on humans and their judgment. This is where we need to converge our opinions further.

We belong to those that would see it possible to continue the discussions on LAWS in one format or another. A more formal mode of discussions might serve a purpose when we consider the path towards the 2016 Review Conference. Not prejudging the outcome of any discussions we would see benefits in a more defined process and a more focused discussion. As some others have indicated one possibility to take the discussions forward would include the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts as the chairman has also put forward as an option in his food-for-thought paper. We also stand ready to consider different ways to improve transparency concerning LAWS.

Thank you Mr. Chairman