

General statement by Sweden at the CCW GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), 9-13 April 2018

Mr Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your renewed appointment as Chair of our Meeting and by pledging our full cooperation and support. Sweden stands fully by the statement by the European Union. I would now like to make some additional points from a national perspective.

We continue to consider the CCW an effective forum to respond in a flexible way to developments in the field of weapons technology. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the ICRC, and note that civil society has many valuable contributions to make to our work. Against this background, we welcome the opportunity to continue our discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems, LAWS, in this forum.

Sweden very much appreciated the interesting discussions at the first meeting of the GGE on LAWS last November. As States we have an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons, and we will therefore welcome a continued discussion with a focus on these issues within the framework of this Governmental Group of Experts.

Mr Chairman,

We are still lacking a clear definition of the term LAWS. We have read with great interest the proposals in this regard, put forward by State Parties in several working papers that were presented to the GGE. For example, it has been suggested that there would first be a need to consider a set of acceptability criteria for the development and use of future LAWS in order to be able to describe with more accuracy the characteristics of the systems we are considering. This GGE may wish to consider a preliminary working definition for the purpose of more focussed discussions, bearing in mind that systems such as remotely piloted and automated systems are not within the scope of the GGE.

Our understanding is that a broad consensus already exists on recognizing that international law, including international humanitarian law, applies to the use of all weapons in armed conflict, and that potential future autonomous weapons systems would be no exception.

In this connection, we would like to underline the importance of conducting legal reviews of new weapons, means and methods of warfare. We found the working papers on article 36 reviews, as well as on ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law presented to the meeting of the GGE very useful. Sweden fully shares

the views expressed in the papers mentioned on the importance of upholding international law. We also share the recommendations presented on the need for all States to review new weapons, means or methods of warfare, on the usefulness of voluntary exchange of States' national experiences with review procedures, and the encouragement of information exchange between States, including on best practices, all in the interest of greater transparency. We are pleased to note that SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, will present its studies on Article 36 reviews, and in particular how to deal with the challenges posed by emerging technologies at a side-event tomorrow.

Mr Chairman,

Like other Parties, we actively supported the decision to create a GGE to further examine the issue of LAWS. We hope that we will arrive at some further common understanding and useful insights during the meetings of the GGE this year.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.