



## **German General Statement, CCW Experts Meeting LAWS, Geneva 11-15 April 2016**

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all let me express our gratitude to the staff of the UN Office in Geneva for the preparation of this meeting. After two substantial Meetings of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems we are looking ahead for further discussions this year in focusing our approach and preparing for the CCW Review Conference end of the year. We can build on the continued efforts during the recent Meetings of Experts and especially the substantial report of the last meeting which reflects very comprehensively the different aspects of LAWS and the international discussion. Our task to prepare for a common understanding and approach of a partially unpredictable future technology has shown to be challenging as it is calling for positions and assessments in very different fields like technology development, International Humanitarian Law and Security considerations as well as with regard to important ethical and humanitarian questions with regard to LAWS. While easy answers still seem to be difficult and even not advisable the discussion so far has shown that there are however some fundamental principles which should be emphasized and which could build the basis for our further work.

Firstly, as already underlined in the Meetings of Experts before, Germany will certainly adhere to the principle that it is not acceptable, that the decision to use force, in particular the decision over life and death, is taken solely by an autonomous system without any possibility for a human intervention. Even without a definition on the character and scope of a required human control, which has to stay subject and objective of our discussions, this principle should guide our further work. We are encouraged by the discussions of the previous meetings showing that the international community shares the understanding that it is indispensable to maintain human control over the decision to kill another human being.

Secondly, the principle of unconditional respect for International Law and International humanitarian law. The use of possible future weapons systems, also LAWS are subject to International Law without restrictions. The use must always observe an unequivocal accountability chain. This is of crucial importance for the use of any weapons system.



Thirdly, even with LAWS not existing yet we have to consider a working definition in order to focus our debate. In our view a working definition of LAWS should start with identifying a common understanding of at least minimum requirements regarding the necessity to exercise appropriate levels of human control over the use of force, especially the decision over life and death. Bearing in mind that the discussions about concepts of human control are subject of a broad and lively scientific debate a definition of LAWS must however not be seen as an inevitable first step, as long as there is a consensus on the general principles described above. The work on a definition should rather be an integral part of a formal tasking for an appropriate working group within the CCW.

Fourthly, without LAWS being a reality yet and without even a definition of LAWS transparency and confidence building measures especially with regard to the introduction of new weapons systems are of crucial importance. We should therefor make full use of the process of Legal Weapons Review in accordance to Art 36 AP I in sharing national regulations, looking for common standards and specific procedures for early detecting developments where human control risks to get lost.

Fifth, we reaffirm our will to contribute in pushing this urgent issue forward within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons which is the appropriate forum for further discussions and settlements in regard to this emerging technology.

We welcome the important role of civil society organizations, industry, researchers and scientific organizations within this debate, reflected again in the panels of this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset of an expert meeting which will give us the opportunity to further deepen our understanding of this highly important issue Germany would like to underline that we are invited this year to be more ambitious. The mandate for this experts meeting foresees the possibility to agree on recommendations for further work for consideration by the 2016 Fifth Review Conference. As outlined in this statement we see enough common ground for adopting substantial recommendations for establishing a GGE in 2017 which could be mandated with the elaboration of a working definition and proposals for an enhanced system of confidence and transparency building measures and other issues which might emanate from our discussions this week. We are confident that this meeting will help us to identify sufficient common ground to work in this direction.

Mr. Chairperson, we look forward to a successful meeting with fruitful discussions under your capable leadership. Thanks for your attention