Statement by Turkey

GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS MEETING ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS
15 NOVEMBER 2017

Check against delivery

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Turkey aligns itself with the EU statement. In addition to that, we would like to deliver following statement on our national capacity.

At the outset, please allow me to add my voice to other delegations in congratulating you, Ambassador Gill, for your appointment as the Chairperson of the Group of Governmental Experts Meeting on the Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We assure you of our full support.

We also would like to thank you for the food-for-thought paper that you prepared and shared with delegations well in advance. Given the mandate of “examining emerging technologies in the area of LAWS” by the Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, we believe the very first meeting of the GGE will put all the efforts exerted during there informal meetings of experts which were held between 2014 and 2016 to a higher level.

Mr. Chairman,

Those emerging technologies to be utilised in any form of a future LAWS will most probably be of dual use in their nature. Any technology, associated with LAWS so far, such as artificial intelligence, avionics, high computation power, mechatronics, robotics and many more, for the moment have and in the future will further have immense effects not only on economy and development but also on health, transportation, security, military and so on.

Therefore, I once again would like to reiterate Turkey’s main considerations on this topic.
Mr. Chairman,

The CCW is the right forum to address the matters related to the LAWS, given its extensive technical, military and diplomatic expertise. We support the mandate given by the CCW to the GGE on LAWS and look forward to expand discussions in this meeting, which would lay the ground for further progress.

We also share the disappointment caused by the cancellation of the first GGE meeting to be convened in August due to lack of funding. If that meeting was convened, today certainly we could be at another level in our efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that, as it has been the case for the great majority of disarmament and arms control tools, the first step is agreeing upon a complete and comprehensive definition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. If a common ground could be found on a possible working definition for LAWS, we think that the long way in front of us could be better paved.

In our opinion, prohibiting such systems before a broad agreement on definitions would not be pragmatic. In that regard, we consider that discussing relevant terminologies and characteristics of LAWS is expected to level the ground.

We, as many other delegations, attach importance to the humanitarian aspect of the matter. Therefore, we support the notions like need for human control and accountability for such weapon systems. Humans should always assume the ultimate responsibility when dealing with question of life and death. In this regard, we believe that the framework of human control may provide a necessary baseline from which common understandings can be developed.

Nevertheless, taking into consideration that such weapon systems do not exist yet and we are working on an issue, which is still hypothetical, we hesitate on the accuracy of a general pre-emptively prohibition.

Finally, we are of the opinion that current international law and international humanitarian law provide the necessary basis regarding possible development of LAWS, but we do not disregard any need to further study the sufficiency of them on this matter.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.