

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND**



STATEMENT

to the

**Informal Meeting of Experts
on
Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems**

13 - 17 April 2015

Please check against delivery

General Debate

Mr President,

1. Firstly please allow me to thank you for all of your excellent work in preparing this meeting. The programme appears comprehensive, and you have invited an excellent selection of experts to contribute.
2. The United Kingdom is of the view that these discussions continue to be relevant and timely. Over recent years concern has been expressed about possible developments in the field of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and it is right that we give the matter our serious attention. That is not to prejudge what the outcome of these discussions might be.
3. Over the coming days, we are hoping to make progress in some of the following areas:
 - Firstly, in considering what existing international humanitarian law has to contribute to this discussion. From our perspective, to discuss LAWS is to discuss means and methods of warfare. As such, international humanitarian law provides the appropriate paradigm for discussion. To that end, we look forward to sharing our views on the process of Legal Weapons Review. That is a process which has been developed exactly for situations like the one we are now facing, where the legality of new and novel weapons technologies need to be thoroughly assessed.
 - Secondly, we hope that the technical discussions will give us a realistic baseline of the current state of the art in robotics. It is important that our discussions are grounded in a realistic assessment of the limits and, perhaps more importantly, the possibilities of technology.
 - Thirdly, the discussion on the characteristics of LAWS will be an important one. Within this debate it is important to remember that the CCW has been tasked with considering *emerging* technologies. To that end, we should exchange views about what is and what is not an autonomous weapons system, a subject where clear, careful and well understood definitions will be critical.
 - Fourthly, we are looking forward to hearing further consideration of the wider potential implications of LAWS. The CCW remains the right forum to bring together the most relevant expertise in addressing this issue.

4. Mr President, we look forward to five days of fruitful discussions under your able leadership. Thank you.

