Annotated programme of work for the informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), Geneva, 11-15 April 2016

Submitted by the Chairperson of the informal meeting of experts

Monday 11 April

10:00a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

General debate

1. The general exchange of views will build on the debate form the first two informal meetings of experts in 2014 and 2015.
2. This would also be the opportunity to share positions on national policies and national legal provisions.
3. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to outline expectations regarding the possible recommendations, as stipulated by the CCW mandate for the informal meeting of experts¹, and the way the CCW could deal with lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) in the future. On the basis of this exchange a draft of possible consensual recommendations will be presented by the Chair of the informal meeting of experts at the earliest convenient time and be the subject of informal consultations among CCW States Parties.

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Mapping autonomy

4. In order to gain a better understanding of LAWS, the meeting of experts should devote sufficient time to map actual developments taking place or to be expected concerning autonomous systems in general.
5. This mapping exercise should cover in particular:
   (a) Current developments in the civilian sphere;
   (b) Case studies on maritime, aerial and terrestrial autonomous systems, including standard operating procedures and human machine interaction;
   (c) Current developments in the military sphere;
   (d) Transparency issues.

¹ The Meeting decided to convene an informal meeting of experts of up to five days during the week of 11 to 15 April 2016 to discuss further the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. The Chairperson of the meeting of experts will submit a report in his personal capacity to the 2016 Fifth Review Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Convention. The meeting of experts may agree by consensus on recommendations for further work for consideration by the 2016 Fifth Review Conference.
Tuesday 12 April
10:00a.m. – 1:00 p.m
Towards a working definition of LAWS

6. Concepts so far under discussion can be categorized as either legal or technical approaches to LAWS or contain a prescriptive dimension. These concepts are to be discussed in order to clarify their contribution to the discussion and how these could be operationalized, and to identify first approaches for an eventual practical definition.

7. The possible concepts for discussion are:
   (a) “Critical functions”;
   (b) “Autonomy”;
   (c) “Predictability”;
   (d) “Indicator based approaches”;
   (e) “Meaningful human control”;
   (f) “Human judgment”.

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Towards a working definition of LAWS (continued)

Wednesday 13 April
10:00a.m. – 1:00 p.m

Challenges to International Humanitarian Law

8. Based on the mandate for the 2016 Meeting of Experts (the objectives and purposes of the Convention), an in depth discussion of the complex challenges to International Humanitarian LAW (IHL) and in particular Article 36 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 is proposed.

9. The proposed topics for discussion are:
   (a) State presentations on current procedures, with an emphasis on possible best practices and/or benchmarks concerning Article 36;
   (b) Challenges to Article 36 due to LAWS, including in terms of targeting law, means of warfare and military doctrines;
   (c) Human-machine interaction in terms of various degrees of autonomy as well as political and legal responsibility for actions of autonomous systems;
   (d) Accountability in case of violations of IHL;
   (e) Transparency issues, including relevant standards concerning resilience against
programming and deployment errors as well as vulnerability to cyber-attacks;
(f) Testing and verification procedures/ best practices to ensure compliance with IHL, including a discussion of testing and evaluation of autonomous civilian systems.

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Challenges to International Humanitarian Law (continued)

Thursday 14 April

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Human rights and ethical issues

10. Human rights and ethical issues concerning the development and possible deployment of LAWS constitute a further important issue to be discussed at the meeting of experts.
11. The proposed topics for discussion are:
   (a) Human rights and ethical and issues in different scenarios (e.g. maritime/submarine, aerial and terrestrial environments);
   (b) social acceptance of autonomous systems in general and in the military sphere in particular.

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Security issues

12. Security issues remain a core concern in the discussion of LAWS. The proposed topics for discussion are:
   (a) Possible regional and/or global destabilization due to the deployment of LAWS;
   (b) Proliferation risks, including acquisition and use by non-state actors and terrorists;
   (c) Military value/risks of the deployment of LAWS in different scenarios (e.g. regional or asymmetrical conflicts, homeland defence).

Friday 15 April

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Security issues (continued)

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Concluding session:

13. Oral summaries of the respective sessions.
14. Discussion and possible adoption of consensual recommendations.²
15. Preliminary presentation of the Chairperson’s report.
16. Final statements.

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Concluding session (continued)

² The meeting of experts may agree by consensus on recommendations for further work for consideration by the 2016 Fifth Review Conference.