
Check against Delivery

Statement by

Mrs. Maya Yaron, Minister - Counsellor

Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons (CCW)

**Consideration of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts
on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal autonomous weapons
systems (GGE on LAWS)**

United Nations, Geneva

22 November 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate again Ambassador Singh-Gill for the excellent manner in which he conducted our deliberations at the GGE during the last two years.

Israel found the GGE on LAWS, which took place this year to be insightful, enriching and useful. It proved once again that the CCW continues to be the appropriate forum to discuss the subject of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). At the same time, it is important to remain within the agreed mandate for discussion and stick to the objectives and purposes of the CCW.

The fact that High Contracting Parties succeeded in agreeing by consensus on a 5-page substantial report that contains some significant determinations, illustrates that – despite the complexity of the subject matter and the different approaches of Parties – reaching shared understandings is attainable. It also demonstrates that the existing mandate enables to make concrete progress in the discussions, while still maintaining flexibility, which is necessary due to the futuristic nature of the issue. When the discussion revolves around weapons that do not yet exist, with more unknowns than knowns, incremental progress is the only responsible way to go. We call on all High Contracting Parties to participate actively in future GGE discussions and to include relevant professional experts in their delegations, as this issue requires more and more in-depth knowledge of the technologies and their potential future applications.

Mr. Chairman,

The experts' meetings thus far have helped to promote a greater understanding on the issue of LAWS. We note that there seems to be wide agreement on certain notions, such as that IHL applies to the development and use of LAWS; that humans will always be responsible for the employment of LAWS and should be held accountable for IHL violations in accordance with international law; and that the discussions should not hamper progress in research, development and use of autonomous technologies for peaceful purposes. Many other shared understandings are stipulated in the report adopted in the August GGE.

At the same time, there are issues in which there are still differences of opinion. One of them is the definition or characterization of LAWS. Another issue is the appropriate type and level of human judgment throughout the various phases of the weapon's life cycle, as well as the suitable terminology in this regard.

Looking forward, it seems clear that further in-depth discussions are required, including on human-machine interaction in the various phases of the weapon's life-cycle. In our perspective, human judgment will always be an integral part of any process regarding LAWS, and will be applied throughout their life cycle. LAWS will operate as designed and programmed by humans, and will be another mean to effectuate the intention of commanders and operators. In this regard, High

Contracting Parties could share opinions as well as national practices with regard to the various touchpoints mentioned in the 'sunrise' diagram.

Another specific issue that seems to necessitate further discussions is weapon reviews – a touchpoint that reflects a critical avenue of human input, and directly concerns compliance of the weapon with international law. Israel has shared its own domestic process for legal review of new weapons in a previous GGE meeting, and joins other delegations who view the benefits of elaborating more on this issue.

We should also be aware of the military and humanitarian advantages that may be associated with LAWS, both from the operational as well as the legal aspect. These may include better precision in targeting, and minimizing collateral damage. We believe that these dimensions of LAWS should be further explored.

In conclusion, Israel looks forward to next year's GGE, based on the extension of the current mandate, and hopes that further discussions on this issue will be conducted with a realistic perspective.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.