



**Statement by PAX
Delivered by Miriam Struyk, PAX
Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon
Systems, Geneva, November 2018**

Thank you mr Chairperson, on behalf of my organisation PAX, I would like to make short remarks on the issue of incendiary weapons and on the issue of LAWS.

First, as is well known incendiary weapons produce heat and fire through the chemical reaction of a flammable substance. They cause burn wounds that are difficult to treat and lead to long-term physical and psychological injury. Recent use in Syria has once again showed the harm that these weapons cause to civilians. Our partners in Syria have the most gruesome stories about the humanitarian impact of these weapons and the fear they cause.

Often the general public believes the use of such weapons is already forbidden, but yet they are not, or at least not all of them. We therefore not only urge all states to join Protocol III, but we also call upon states to strengthen the existing protocol III regulations on ground launched incendiary weapons and multipurpose munitions.

Closing these loopholes would strengthen existing rules and create a stronger norm against the use of these weapons. An increased stigma would also influence actors outside the treaty, and moreover it would be the political and moral right thing to do. We therefore encourage contracting parties to set aside time in 2019 to discuss the adequacy of Protocol III in more depth, with the goal to better protect civilians. An informal meeting of experts in 2019 could be a possible way to do so.

Second, regarding the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems, we believe that this year significant progress has been made. At the April GGE meeting it became clear that a majority of states see human control over the use of force as the central element of the debate. In the August meeting it became clear that the majority of states wants to work towards concrete policy outcomes.

Also outside of the CCW we see growing support for new international law. In September the European parliament adopted - with an overwhelming majority - a resolution calling for the start of negotiations for an international prohibition on LAWS. PAX has just published its new report on European positions regarding LAWS. At the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots side event today we will present our findings.

But despite the progress made, we are deeply concerned that a small number of states is blocking this progress. The consequences of stalling and delaying are far reaching. These weapons, once developed, will pose a serious threat to international peace and security, and would violate fundamental ethical and legal norms.

It is therefore encouraging to see a large number of states in the room that share these concerns and are ready to develop and implement concrete policy outcomes to deal with the challenges posed by these weapons. We call on these states to not allow progress to be delayed, as we do not have the time to continue these discussions indefinitely.

There is an urgent need for an international norm, which ensures meaningful human control over the critical functions of weapon systems. For PAX only a legally binding instrument would adequately address all the ethical, legal and security concerns related to LAWS.

Thank you.

