

Statement by H.E. Mr. Andre Pung
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the United
Nations in Geneva

Meeting of the HCP to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (on LAWS)

Geneva, 21-23 November 2018

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Thank you Mr. Chair,

First, let me congratulate you on your election and assure you of our full support and cooperation. Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, but would like to add a few remarks.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the progress made during the 2018 meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and believe that the agreed Guiding Principles provide a good basis for continuing work in 2019. We would hereby like to thank Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill from India for his skilful leadership and dynamic approach to leading our discussions.

We reiterate that any weapon system, irrespective of its autonomous functionality, must only be used in strict compliance with the principles and rules of international law, in particular the International Humanitarian Law and the Human Rights Law. We acknowledge that weapons systems with autonomous functions create challenges for the interpretation and application of the law. Thus, we see merit in examining further the following three issues: 1) the manner in which existing principles and rules of International Humanitarian Law apply and should be interpreted with respect to weapons systems with autonomous functions; 2) the unique challenges involved in legally reviewing such weapons systems, and 3) the desirable nature of human-weapon interaction, to ensure compliance with international law.

Mr Chair,

Estonia believes that the CCW is the appropriate forum for discussing these issues. We support renewing the current mandate of the GGE for 2019 and have a strong preference for meeting at least the same number of days as in 2018.

Thank you!