

**CCW STATES PARTIES
GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS
ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS (LAWS)**

**SECOND MEETING
April 9-13, 2018 – GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for convening us and for your ongoing leadership this week.

The development of the technologies enabling Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems is of great interest to Canadians.

Canada recognizes the CCW as the most appropriate forum to be holding these discussions. Through an open and collaborative dialogue, these will help shape international conversations and policy development.

The need for these meetings is underlined by the fact that technologies continue to evolve and capabilities advance even as there remains considerable lack of agreement on key concepts and definitions.

We agree with the thematic areas that you have identified to frame our discussions this week and look forward to productive exchanges.

Mr. Chair,

In light of these factors, as we move forward it is important to ensure that the consensus-building process remains fundamental to any effective normative initiative.

Through this, we restate our firm commitment to International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law.

We believe that any legal discussion about LAWS should centre on compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including the obligation for all States to ensure the lawfulness of their weapons, means and methods of warfare. These should be our constant reference points.

We urge all High Contracting Parties to factor in the human rights and gender dimensions of LAWS, in these discussions and in national interventions and in their representation of women in consultations and delegations.

Canada is supportive of developing key Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures and looks forward to exploring these and other such ideas here.

An important part of the LAWS discussion centers on levels of human interaction with autonomous weapons. In Canada's Defence Policy Document, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the Government of Canada has committed to "maintain appropriate human involvement in the use of military capabilities that can exert lethal force".

To conclude, we wish to express our appreciation to India, and you, for chairing this GGE, and our thanks to all those who contributed working papers for this meeting.

Thank you.