



Group of Governmental Experts
on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) 2018,
Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Policy Options

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H.E. Sabrina Dallafior
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

Mr. Chair,

As my delegation stated at the beginning of this week, Switzerland is of the view that the CCW should direct its work **towards concrete outcomes**.

In this regard, let me stress again, that in order for our work to be concrete, the CCW should **not restrict its focus** on the tip of the iceberg, on “science fiction systems” which might never be developed, and if they were developed, would probably *not* meet legal and ethical norms or military requirements.

Mr. Chair,

With regard to concrete **policy options**, we continue to see a variety of possible avenues. Considering the (various) views among delegations, we see particular value **in avenues that provide sufficient flexibility**, so that the CCW can both continue to deepen the various topics related to AWS, and start working towards concrete results.

Like other delegations, Switzerland is of the view that a **political declaration** would represent a flexible way forward and an appropriate objective for the CCW at this stage:

A declaration would require extensive work, but we are convinced that the very process of working in such a direction could **give our discussions the necessary focus. It would not necessarily represent an endpoint, but rather provide guidance on the way forward.** Of course, such a declaration would be without prejudice to further discussion including on the question whether further *regulatory* work is needed.

A political declaration could capture where views converge, by affirming a number of key principles and by validating shared understandings. This week's discussions confirmed our view that it should be possible to agree on a principled commitment that High Contracting Parties will **retain a certain degree of human decision-making or control over Autonomous Weapons Systems, whereas the type and level of that control embedded or exerted in the different stages of the life-cycle of a system is yet to be better understood.** Other principles and shared understandings could figure in such a declaration, as outlined by my delegation in more detail on Monday.

A **first example** for concrete work in the CCW – whether triggered by a political declaration as just referred to, or by a more specific GGE mandate – are **weapons reviews**: This week showed again the centrality of the obligation to conduct legal reviews in the area of Autonomous Weapons Systems. The GGE could

- discuss a number of questions regarding **specific challenges** of reviews of such systems;
- explore whether new **evaluation and testing procedures** are required; and
- identify **standard methods and protocols** for testing autonomous weapons systems.

A **second example** for concrete work would be **transparency and confidence building**. Like work on weapons reviews, measures in this area could be triggered by a political declaration or by a GGE decision. Of particular interest could be the **sharing of information about how control over such systems is maintained.** We saw this week the potential of sharing such information, and additional presentations in the framework a structured exchange could multiply the benefit of such exercises.

A **third example** for practical work would be to **collate and clarify the relevant existing legal provisions** as they apply to Autonomous Weapons Systems. With such a document, the CCW could reaffirm and spell out applicable international law, in particular International Humanitarian Law (as well as other branches of international law, most notably human rights

law). Such an endeavor would underline the CCW's resolve to center its work around compliance.

Other types of practical work could be considered.

Mr. Chair,

Before concluding, I would like to raise one point echoing several statements made this morning. If we have been able to take forward all items on our agenda in the course of the week, one element or development seems to be of particular significance. This concerns the notion or principle of human control.

A largely shared understanding seems to prevail today that autonomous weapon systems must remain under human control. This constitutes an important common consideration, and one that we may want to seek to capture in the outcome of the GGE.

This development is also significant because it provides guidance for our work going forward. A lot of work remains ahead of us to identify what the principle of human control means in practice to be effectively met:

- Discussions this week have indicated that human control could intervene at different stages of the AWS life-cycle, and not only in the employment phase,
- They have also underlined that within the employment phase, human control may need to take different forms depending on the environment or conditions in which the system is engaged.

We believe that such questions and considerations should constitute important elements of our work going forward.

I thank you for your attention.