

Mr. President,

Since the Czech Republic is taking the floor for the first time allow me to congratulate you Mr. President, on your assumption of the difficult task – the chairmanship of this informal Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. I want to assure you of the full support and cooperation of our delegation.

The Czech Republic as a party to CCW and all its protocols fulfills all its obligations in this regard and will maintain an active involvement in the relevant activities.

The Czech Republic welcomes the decision taken by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to convene informal Meeting of Experts. Unlike initiatives being brought to other fora, we find the CCW platform appropriate to discuss questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We also believe the meeting will provide a unique opportunity for States Parties to discuss the increasingly important issue of LAWS, that can fundamentally change the way of fighting wars and conduct of armed conflicts and of course could represent a serious threat for civilians.

If it has been quite difficult to keep a balance between humanitarian concerns and security requirements in the past, it will be even bigger challenge to strike it within the context of sophisticated autonomous weapons of the future. This is only one of the reasons why we think it is important to start work on the needs of protecting civilians and combatants from possible effects of LAWS well in advance before they will be developed.

The Czech Republic, similarly as many other state parties to CCW, does not have a firm coordinated national position on or an approach towards many aspects of LAWS. Views that might be expressed in 2 national presentations, provided by our experts from the Czech Defense University will not represent a national position on any aspect of research, development or production or of future use of LAWS. Our hope is however, that we could start to build it on results of this meeting.

We believe that LAWS despite their complexity will become an important part of CCW as an international humanitarian tool with the potential to effectively prevent a negative impact of these weapons on civilian populations.

Thank you Mr. President.