

Association for Aid and Relief (AAR Japan) statement by Yukie Osa  
To the Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of Experts  
Geneva, Switzerland, April 12, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan) is a non-governmental organization based in Japan, which currently operates humanitarian projects in 17 countries including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria, where we work to protect and assist people facing the threat of indiscriminate weapons such as landmines and cluster munitions. While we deal with the impacts of existing inhumane weapons on affected communities we are also monitoring future trends. We are deeply concerned at the prospect of autonomous weapons that would select and attack targets without any human intervention. Therefore we call for a pre-emptive ban on fully autonomous weapons.

When we cooperated with global coalitions to ban landmines and cluster munition with international campaigns, these weapons had already been widely used, causing significant humanitarian harm. Fully autonomous weapons are yet to be developed, but now is the time for action as it may become increasingly difficult to do so once nations invest in their development.

As a co-founder of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and member of its leadership steering committee, AAR Japan has held events in Japan to increase awareness. Last month, we convened a public talk in Tokyo by campaign coordinator Mary Wareham under the auspices of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This followed an event in November 2013 with Peter Asaro from the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC). The events attracted media interest and public attention.

Around the world, the general public is becoming more aware of the many challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons. The response in Japan and other countries is one of great concern stemming from the desire to protect ourselves and future generations from violence and insecurity. Dealing with fully autonomous weapons is not only a political or military choice, but a humanitarian priority and moral obligation that our society as a whole has to engage in.

We welcome the swift and serious way in which governments have taken up this issue at CCW. Now is the time not to decelerate, but to accelerate the pace of your discussions, to make them more in-depth by dedicating more time, and to establish a more formal process aimed at achieving a strong outcome. We stand ready to support your deliberations both here and with the public support we can generate back home.

Thank you.