



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE & THE
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
GENEVA

STATEMENT by GREECE
Meeting of the High Contracting Parties
Geneva, 21-23 November 2018

Mr President,

As it is the first time we take the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to assure you of our delegation's full support to your endeavor. I am confident that with your rich experience you will guide this conference to positive achievements.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Mr President,

The CCW is a forum that brings together expertise from many different fields and enables us to address a wide variety of issues, both longstanding and newly emerging. At the same time, the inclusive nature of the CCW, where all major stakeholders including producers participate, is the natural forum that ensures the necessary balance between military utility and humanitarian concerns.

Therefore, we strongly believe that the universalization of the Convention and its protocols will ensure the success of our efforts for the ban or restriction of the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. For this reason, we call upon all States that have

not yet acceded to the Convention and its protocols to take all measures necessary to becoming parties as soon as possible.

Mr President,

The planning stage is of utmost importance in military operations and consists of a sequence of steps through which military officers formulate overall goals, gather intelligence, select targets, identify the most suitable type of weapon, and decide under what circumstances and preconditions to deploy a particular weapon, especially when military targets are located in densely populated areas.

In this context, when the decision to launch a weapon is taken, it must be in accordance with the principles of IHL. We are all mindful of the consequences arising from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. It is therefore necessary that all parties of an armed conflict both respect and implement the principles of IHL.

As far as the land mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPMs) are concerned, the Hellenic Republic acknowledges that they constitute a legitimate weapon which is necessary for its national defense planning. We take note of the humanitarian concerns arising from its indiscriminate use. However, it is also necessary not to ignore the military concerns and considerations on this issue.

Greece is deeply concerned about the increasing impact of attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), as they are a type of weapon that can take any form and be activated in a variety of ways. The use of IEDs plays an increasingly important role and will continue to be part of the operating environment, both for military and humanitarian operations. Therefore, we have to continue the efforts on how we can best deal with this threat in order to mitigate human suffering caused by the use of these explosive devices, having in mind that it constitutes a multi-dimensional issue that requires responses at different levels (e.g. counterterrorism measures, monitoring customs controls, military and humanitarian operations etc).

Mr President,

Regarding the potential development and use of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, at the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS, Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill, whose skills in this multi-dimensional issue facilitated the GGE's work and led to an agreed outcome, namely the "Possible Guiding Principles", that provide us with the basis for continuing our work in 2019.

As we have stated in the past, the conformity of fully Lethal autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) with the provisions of IHL and its cardinal principles remains dubious. This is because it is doubtful whether it is possible to program these weapons to be in compliance with complex legal/ethical concepts, such as the principles of discrimination and proportionality, particularly considering the constantly diversifying environment of a battlefield.

Therefore, it is very important to ensure that humans will remain in control of their development, deployment and use with regard to possible military applications of emerging technologies, not only to ensure that the creation and use of undesirable applications will be avoided, but mainly that dignity over decisions on life and death will be preserved.

In this context, we strongly believe that the CCW remains the appropriate forum to continue discussing the issue of LAWS, with a view to further enhancing our common understanding on the multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects involved.

Last but not least, I would like to commend you Mr President for your efforts to address the financial difficulties that the Convention is facing and I would like to emphasize that it is very important that all States deposit in a timely manner their financial contribution in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

Thank you