

**Statement on Behalf of The Nobel Women's Initiative,
A Founding Organization of The Campaign To Stop
Killer Robots**

by Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time given to civil society to speak.

Before continuing with our statement, I would like to note the likely obvious that the Nobel Women's Initiative aligns itself with the statements of the other members of our campaign who have spoken today.

In a media interview earlier today I was asked why the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has put faith in the Convention on Conventional Weapons' ability to negotiate a treaty banning killer robots, in the sense that we are calling for the positive obligation of meaningful human control over the target and kill functions of such weapons.

That is not an illogical question given that many of us have participated in weapons ban treaty negotiations outside of the CCW when it failed to deal meaningfully with antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions. But the Campaign has returned to the CCW on this issue of great urgency because we honestly – although many might not believe it - would like to see the CCW succeed in moving beyond conversations delivering no concrete outcomes to a mandate to negotiate a new CCW protocol to ban killer robots. We do not want to see the CCW fail again to respond adequately to issues around weapons of great ethical, moral, and legal concern.

We are pleased that so many states and regional and other groupings of states are speaking out strongly and clearly for the need to move beyond talk and deliver a mandate to begin negotiations on killer robots. We believe that in no small part that is the result of discussions here over the past 5 years but we do not believe that a rollover mandate for more such talk would be anything but superfluous.

As pleased as we are with the forward movement of so many states, we remain disturbed that those numerous voices that have spoken out for a ban treaty mandate can be effectively silenced by the consensus rule in the CCW. This, of course, means that a small group of states or even one state alone can block action on killer robots even if the overwhelming number of states party to the CCW want to negotiate a treaty. I would call that a dictatorship.

It should be no surprise at all that the states that are moving quickly toward acquiring these weapons are the states that want to see a do-nothing mandate coming out of this GGE focusing on more deliberations about the complexities of the multiple issues surrounding killer robots - particularly the definition of such weapons and what constitutes meaningful human control. The Nobel Women's Initiation holds the uneasy and disconcerting belief the question of the so-called difficulty of definitions has been and continues to be willful obfuscation simply to drag out future deliberations with no concrete action.

Both now and in April, CCW delegates listened to panels of a few dozen technical and weapons experts. The Campaign to Ban Killer Robots is asking that they listen to the many, many thousands of AI, computer and robotics scientists, engineers, and programmers as well as the voices of civil society who do not want to see weapons that on their own can target and attack human beings.

Many of the nuclear physicists who helped create the nuclear bomb regretted their participation in making nuclear weapons a reality and felt tarnished by having done so. Only one scientist that I know of, but likely there were more, left the project before its completion due to ethical and moral concerns. That was Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Sir Joseph Rotblatt, who dedicated the rest of his life to getting rid of nuclear weapons.

Sir Joseph was but one. In the case of stopping killer robots, the numbers – as mentioned above and elaborated on by our colleague in her statement on behalf of the Future of Life Institute – are in the many thousands and growing. These scientists do not want to also have their professions carry a similar burden of shame and regret.

The CCW has continuously called itself the appropriate forum to deal with killer robots. Simply continuing with a mandate of more deliberation without concrete action will demonstrate that it actually is a forum to continue the status quo while work on killer robots continues unabated.

We stand with those states that want to see action now. We want to see a mandate to begin negotiations of a new CCW protocol on killer robots. Without a new protocol, surely there will ultimately be a new, stand-alone treaty banning killer robots.

Thank you. ###