

15.5.2023

Joint Statement
Translating the Progress at the GGE LAWS into a Substantive Outcome

Delivered by Germany and the Philippines

Mr. Chair,

I am taking the floor on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uruguay, and my own country Germany, and the European Union.

We wish to highlight the significant conceptual progress that has been made this year in the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), while also noting the need for further work in the GGE, leading to tangible outcomes. What unites us is the willingness for further constructive work, as expressed in different initiatives, such as the Joint Statement of 70 states in last year's UNGA First Committee in which signatories committed to strengthen efforts to address the issue of autonomy in weapons systems.

We also acknowledge the productive discussions held, in particular, during conferences hosted by The Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, Costa Rica and Luxembourg.

This year's GGE considered several concrete proposals as part of its mandate to intensify consideration of proposals and elaborate by consensus possible measures, including taking into account the examples of existing protocols within the Convention, and other options related to the normative and operational framework. We thank the High Contracting Parties that submitted proposals and actively engaged in the discussions, which has greatly contributed to the quality of the GGE's work.

While differences remain among States' national positions, we see several important emerging commonalities regarding the normative and operational framework. An approach we all share consists of a set of 1) prohibitions and 2) measures and regulations. This approach is centered around compliance with international law, in particular the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. While delegations use different terms like human judgement, control or involvement, there is a broadly shared recognition that humans must remain at the center. Relevant ethical perspectives should guide considerations of this framework.

We see some crucial elements of this approach reflected in the Chair's draft report, which we consider to be a very good basis for discussion, also with a view to our future work. We express our full confidence, appreciation, and support for the Chair's leadership. In this regard, we call upon all GGE members to continue their constructive

efforts and to translate the progress that was evident at the GGE's first session in March into a substantive outcome.

We welcome that the draft report reflects important elements of an approach based on prohibitions and regulations. We welcome in particular the focus on the role of humans in the context of autonomy in weapon systems, namely in order to ensure that such weapon systems are designed, developed and used in compliance with international law, and in particular with the rules and principles of international humanitarian law, by ensuring an appropriate level of human involvement throughout the life-cycle of the weapon system, preserving human responsibility and accountability and implementing legal reviews and risk mitigation measures.

Aspects that are relevant in terms of a prohibition-, regulation- and measures-based approach include, inter alia, that human agency and a framework of human responsibility and accountability is retained throughout the whole life cycle of a weapon, including in the development and use of weapons systems featuring autonomy, ensuring compliance with applicable international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and in order to address the risk of unintended engagements. For an approach based on prohibitions and regulations to be fully fleshed out, we also think that further work is necessary in the GGE on possible regulatory measures, controls and limits, as well as on weapons reviews, risk mitigation measures, unintended biases, understandability and explainability.

Mr. Chair

The 52 states supporting this statement wish to underline that the GGE has made considerable progress. We encourage all GGE members to dig beneath the labels of terminology. Let us continue our work in the constructive spirit that we saw in March - with the view to consenting a substantial outcome report that reflects the convergence that is emerging in this group.