



**Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA,
Permanent Representative of the Delegation of Japan to the
Conference on Disarmament**

**2023 Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the
Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems: 6 – 10 March
Agenda 5, Topic 1: Characterization of LAWS - definitions and scope**

Mr. Chairperson,

As you proposed, Japan continues to support the continuation of the discussion in this Group on the characteristics of weapons systems which are our subjects.

What is important about this GGE is that the scope of discussion may include technologies in the area of AI that is progressing at a rapid pace, potentially enabling novel and more sophisticated weapons with autonomous functions.

Although it is difficult to define them in the context of LAWS, we believe that a consensus is already forming on the characteristics of weapons that could be particularly relevant to our common endeavor. Our discussion should focus on those weapons systems equipped with autonomous functions used for selecting targets and engaging against them with no human involvement or with different degree of it. On the other hand, many existing weapon systems that automatically select and engage targets after weapons systems activation have been used without controversy, like homing munitions. Therefore, We believe that those in which the operator has identifies a target or target group in advance for

engagement are not included in the weapons that could be particularly relevant to our discussion.

Thus, those weapons systems that, once activated, can identify, select, and engage targets with lethal force without further intervention by an operator may have the characteristics of an autonomous weapon system (AWS) to be discussed in this Group. These characteristics are clearly laid out in the Principles and Good Practices which Japan has proposed with Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Homing munitions with autonomous functions are not considered a weapon system that should be specifically discussed in this Group. To be sure, in launching or in dropping such weapons, it is important for the commander and operator to determine, based on the information available to him or her at that time, whether the requirements of IHL principles such as the distinction, proportionality, and precautionary measures are satisfied. In this regard, it should be noted that there are already many weapon systems that have a function whereby the operator identifies a target group for engagement and then activates the system, and after the system is activated, the system automatically selects and engages targets, and these systems have been used without any problems regarding the application of IHL to the systems.

Weapon systems such as CIWS (close-in defensive fire systems) and BMD systems (Aegis ballistic missile defense systems), where the operator relies on autonomous functions for target selection and engagement and does not identify targets for engagement prior to weapon activation, are considered more relevant to the emerging technologies in the AWS area. Such weapon systems are cases where Principles and Good

Practices could be of particular relevance.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.