

**Group of Governmental Experts session 6-10 March 2023**  
**Aotearoa New Zealand intervention – 7 March 2023**

Thank you Chair.

Thank you for the way in which you've been moderating the discussion so ably, and to delegations for the really constructive and engaging discussion.

Thank you for including this topic in the indicative timetable, which gives members the opportunity to elaborate on the much referenced, two-tier approach, and to speak in more specificity about what this should capture. As you've rightly acknowledged, all the topics we are discussing are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, but we see this one as particularly relevant to our mandate of intensifying our work to elaborate measures.

For New Zealand, we see a clear need for new legally-binding prohibitions and regulations on autonomous weapons systems.

Our view is that autonomous weapons systems that cannot comply with international humanitarian law must be prohibited. This includes those that have effects that cannot be anticipated or controlled.

Here, I'd like to subscribe to comments made earlier today that it's important the first tier of prohibition is not narrowly defined to only "fully autonomous weapons systems" (or the acronym FLAWS as you proposed, Chair). We think that concentrating on this will limit the utility of the exercise we are undertaking.

Chair, for other autonomous weapons systems falling below the threshold of prohibitions, we are of the view they should be regulated through positive obligations, to ensure that we safeguard appropriate standards of human involvement or control, and preserve accountability under international humanitarian law. The paper submitted by 23 countries last year offered some potential examples, including limits on the duration, and geographical scope, but we note there's a wealth of useful suggestions across other proposals.

Lastly, a small point on how we describe the application of existing IHL in any GGE outcome. We'd encourage references proposed to be as consistent as possible with agreed terminology so as to ensure the broadest possible support.

Thank you Chair.