At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the position as Chair of this group. Please be assured that the UK will support your efforts in a constructive and proactive manner.

This is the first GGE meeting under our new Mandate. The UK welcomes this new mandate. It provides this group with the clear opportunity to make meaningful progress with a view to delivering the results that the international community is expecting of this group. It sets us a definite goal to achieve and allows us good time in which to do so. It behoves this group to take that opportunity.

Mr Chair, this Group has built a large body of work to support progress. We have a significant number of proposals to build from and a clear idea of the positions across this room, the areas where we can solidify consensus and the areas of divergence. Nevertheless, they contain much detail that demonstrates that the areas of convergence vastly outweigh the areas of divergence. It is those elements that we should focus on to achieve a positive outcome.

Areas of commonality are the application of IHL to all weapons, the centrality of human involvement and the importance of legal reviews. Areas of divergence include the need for a legally-binding instrument and the manner of human involvement - where differences exist over terminology as well as the requirement for real-time supervision. The UK notes that despite divergence on the nature of the instrument that best services the call in our mandate, we can make significant and necessary progress through the exposition and articulation of the rules and practical considerations of use which apply to AWS.

In that vein, the UK has co-sponsored proposal with our colleagues from the USA/Canada/Japan/Australia/Poland and Republic of Korea that sets out a series of regulatory measures on the basis of international humanitarian law. It advocates a series of draft articles which would constitute an impactful measure by setting forth common international understandings of prohibitions and other regulatory regulations for the effective implementation of IHL principles and requirements in relation to LAWS.

Mr Chair, the UK delegation looks forward to a fruitful meeting that makes good progress. Therefore, we commend you Mr Chair for the guiding questions that you posed to us and would encourage the conversation to be framed around textual prompts on screen to better elicit meaningful engagement that will enable articulation of the various points of view.