Statement by Norway to the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

Geneva, 4 March 2024

Chair,

Allow me first to express our gratitude to you, and the Netherlands, for chairing this GGE and facilitating the current discussions. Let me also reiterate the importance that not only states, but also international organisations, civil society and other stakeholders, contribute to international normative developments, including the work of this GGE.

In view of the mandate to develop a set of elements of an instrument without prejudging its nature, the GGE is best situated to address the substance of those elements. In order to satisfy our mandate, we do well to remember that the elements that the GGE in the end will recommend should also be apt for inclusion in a binding instrument.

International engagement on military use of AI, including LAWS, is growing. In December, the UN General Assembly took its first action on LAWS. In order for our efforts under the CCW to remain relevant, this GGE should aim to progress at an accelerated pace and produce recommendations before the end of next year. We should move quickly to substantive issues.

Along with several High Contracting Parties, Norway continues to strongly believe in the usefulness of the two-tier approach. We have therefore taken note of the call of the Secretary General of the UN to conclude, by 2026, a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems that function without human control or oversight, and which cannot be used in compliance with international humanitarian law.

It is quite clear to Norway that international law, and in particular humanitarian law, already prescribes limits on the employment of autonomous weapons systems. The elements of an instrument to be elaborated by this GGE should contribute to clarifying those limits. In order to heed the call of the Secretary General, they should be clarified in a manner suitable for inclusion in a legally binding instrument.

Together with Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany and Italy and Luxembourg we have submitted a working paper on elements of an instrument that we believe can facilitate substantive discussions on the basis of a two-tier approach.

Thank you.