Mister Chair,

The Philippine Delegation congratulates Ambassador Robert in den Bosch for the assumption of chairmanship to this Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS. This is not a walk in the park, but the Philippines assures you of its support and constructive engagement towards a substantive outcome. We also appreciate your conduct of informal virtual consultations ahead of the work that we will do this week and the clarifications you have provided in relation to the topics that this group will take on.

In line with this, the Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Costa Rica on behalf of the group of states that proposed a Draft Protocol on Autonomous Weapon Systems last year. We believe that our work in the coming days should be approached comprehensively, and must consider the other dimensions crucial to the completion of the mandate of this GGE.
Mister Chair,

There are high expectations among our publics on the progress that this Group will be able to deliver, given that it has been more than a decade since discussions on this topic have commenced. We reiterate the existence of concrete proposals in the past that already highlighted important points of convergence, namely, that the role of humans must remain central to the use of force, and the means of methods of warfare are not unlimited and should remain restricted both on the basis of international law, taking into account relevant ethical perspectives.

Next, we need a set of prohibitions and a set of regulations to govern emerging technologies in the area of autonomous weapon systems.

While we recognize the incremental progress made in last year’s GGE, with the addition of elements and concepts that will be integral to the negotiation of an instrument containing measures to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapons systems, this Group should firm up its efforts to advance towards the negotiation of a legally binding instrument. The updated version of the Draft Protocol VI submitted last year provides a basis upon which the aforementioned instrument could be negotiated.
Mister Chair,

As we work towards realizing the ambitious but not impossible mandate of this GGE, the Philippine delegation will work to support you in ensuring that we will have a substantive report centered around a set of prohibitions and a set of regulations. We will be constructive and flexible and work towards arriving at a consensus, and we hope that this same outlook will prevail among the delegations.

Thank you, Mister Chair.