Note No. 51/24

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malawi to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General and has the honour to inform that the Republic of Malawi is extremely concerned about the challenges and concerns related to Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) from humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives. Therefore, the Republic of Malawi would like to call for the start of negotiations of a legally binding instrument on Autonomous Weapons Systems as soon as possible. The negotiations should happen in the forum that is most inclusive and open to all stakeholders, and most likely to be ambitious and successful. The General Assembly should consider starting negotiation in 2024 parallel to continued dialogue in all appropriate multilateral fora to encourage mutual enforcement.

The Republic of Malawi is of the view that a treaty is required to prohibit fundamentally unacceptable autonomous weapons systems and regulate the use of other autonomous weapons systems. Meaningful human control over an attack should be a central element of a regulatory framework. The human user must be able to make a legal and moral judgement, as well as be capable of being held accountable for any violations of legal and moral norms. This means AWS that target people must also be prohibited for legal and ethical reasons. All other AWS should be regulated through restrictions and positive obligations to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force. Development of a legally binding instrument on AWS should include perspectives on human rights, ethics, bias, and perspectives from marginalised and affected communities. The Republic of Malawi stands ready to work with all States to urgently develop a legal instrument.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malawi to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Secretary-General the assurances of its highest consideration.

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