1. As a small State, Singapore has always supported the rules-based multilateral system and the role of the United Nations ("UN"). The UN provides the foundation for international law and norms. Multilateral institutions, systems, and laws are critical for the survival of all States, in particular small States.

2. Accordingly, with regard to the governance of lethal autonomous weapons systems ("LAWS"), we believe that it is important for the international community to engage multilaterally to achieve substantive outcomes.

3. Singapore affirms the principle that international humanitarian law ("IHL") applies to the use of LAWS. Given the rapid advancement of autonomy in weapons systems and artificial intelligence ("AI") technologies, we believe it is important to continue discussing the governance of LAWS in a multilateral setting.

**Advancing International Humanitarian Law**


5. Singapore’s accession to the CCW underscores our commitment to IHL. The CCW, as a framework convention, has yielded important protocols that have further enhanced international law. Singapore is committed to the continued codification and progressive development of the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict.

6. Under the ambit of the CCW, the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS was formally convened seven years ago. Singapore believes that the GGE on LAWS is the appropriate forum to discuss the governance of LAWS, as the forum involves an inclusive representation of legal, military, and technological experts. Singapore supports the “two-tier approach” on the prohibition and regulation of LAWS as agreed at the GGE in 2023. We believe that the use of LAWS that are incapable of being used in compliance with IHL should be prohibited, and support the concept of limits to ensure that LAWS can be used in accordance with IHL.

7. As some UN Member States are not High Contracting Parties to the CCW and are unable to participate in the UN GGE on LAWS, the Secretary-General’s
call for views on LAWS facilitates participation from the entire UN membership. Singapore voted in favour of UNGA resolution 78/241 requesting the UN Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on LAWS. We believe that the Secretary-General’s report can act as an important resource for the UN GGE on LAWS to consider in the development of a governance framework for LAWS.

8. Singapore will continue to contribute constructively to the UN GGE on LAWS with a view to achieving substantive progress under its current mandate, and hope that States will achieve alignment on the elements of an instrument to govern LAWS.

**Incorporation of AI in LAWS**

9. LAWS do not necessarily incorporate AI, as LAWS can also be built upon rules-based programming. However, where AI is applied in critical functions in LAWS, we must recognise the risks of unintended outcomes. If AI behaves in an unanticipated manner in LAWS, the resulting effects can be very serious, such as unintended escalation, friendly fire, or unlawful harm to civilians.

10. Singapore is committed to the responsible development and use of AI in the military realm. Through several years of extensive consultations with defence technologists, military planners, international law experts, and policy professionals, Singapore developed national principles on responsible military AI. These principles were announced in 2021 and address four key areas of concern pertaining to AI in the military domain.

   a. **Responsible.** First, the risk of emergent AI behaviour must be addressed. AI systems must have well-defined intended uses, and both developers and users are responsible for the outcomes of AI systems.

   b. **Reliable.** Second, the risk of errors or inaccuracies in an AI system’s output must be addressed. AI systems should be tested and assured to a level appropriate for their intended use. They should be designed to minimise unintended bias and produce consistent outputs.

   c. **Robust.** Third, the risks from the exploitation of AI by malicious actors must be addressed. AI systems should be designed with cyber and adversarial AI threats in mind. In order to address the “black box effect”, their development process should be well-documented to support explainability.
d. Safe. Fourth, we must focus on the risk of AI failure in safety-critical contexts. AI systems should be safe to use, not only in terms of the deployed platforms, but also the surrounding assets and personnel.

**Regional Initiatives on AI and LAWS**

11. Regional initiatives are essential to ensure inclusive and context-specific discussions on LAWS. In February 2024, Singapore co-hosted the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) Regional Consultations for Asia. REAIM, a process jointly initiated by the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, focuses on advancing norms on responsible AI through inclusive, multi-stakeholder, and cross-regional dialogue. At the Regional Consultations for Asia, an interactive exercise was conducted, discussing the challenges and concerns of integrating AI into military operations. The exercise facilitated open discussions, and deepened regional understanding of AI developments in relation to LAWS.

12. Singapore also participated actively in the Manila Meeting on Indo-Pacific Perspectives on Autonomous Weapons Systems organised by the Philippines in December 2023. The meeting considered the implications regarding the use of autonomy in weapons systems, and offered a platform for voices from civil society, industry, international law experts, as well as defence and foreign affairs officials.

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