Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the adoption of the historic General Assembly resolution 78/241 on “Lethal autonomous weapons”. In various multilateral fora on this issue, Trinidad and Tobago has expressed concern that lethal autonomous weapons systems - weapons designed to independently select and engage targets without the need for meaningful human control - pose risks to national, regional and international security and raises significant legal, ethical and moral concerns. Trinidad and Tobago questions the conformity of these weapons with applicable international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international criminal law and issues of accountability and responsibility in the event of civilian harm or other unintended consequences and is gravely concerned about the extent to which LAWS has the potential to transform the dynamics of transnational organized crime, armed violence, terrorism and armed conflicts.

Trinidad and Tobago therefore advocates for greater examination in international discussions and multilateral fora, of the implications of LAWS for non-proliferation and the risks of diversion to non-state actors, including criminals and terrorist groups and the challenges of LAWS to internal and domestic security, including law enforcement and border security.

As a contribution to ongoing international discussion on the issue, Trinidad and Tobago convened a CARICOM Regional Workshop on Achieving the Universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in July 2023, followed by a CARICOM Conference on the “Human Impacts of Autonomous Weapons”, which took place in September 2023. The CARICOM Conference resulted in the adoption of the CARICOM Declaration on Autonomous Weapons Systems which call for “new legally binding measures within the domain of autonomous weapons systems to ensure compliance with international law, encompassing IHL, IHRL, ICL and ethical frameworks, guaranteeing human control over the application of force.”

These meetings were preceded by the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference which took place in Costa Rica in February 2023, culminating in the adoption of the Belén Communiqué, where the region called for “the urgent negotiation of an international legally binding instrument, with prohibitions and regulations with regard to autonomy in weapons systems.”

Further, Trinidad and Tobago participated in the International Conference “Humanity at the Crossroads: Autonomous Weapons Systems and the Challenge of Regulation” in Austria in April 2024. This Conference provided a valuable space for States to continue to elaborate enriching and substantive discussions on the issue. Importantly, Trinidad and Tobago aligns with the Chair’s Summary Report of the Vienna Conference.
Trinidad and Tobago therefore joins the growing consensus among States that call for negotiations of an international legally binding instrument that prohibits unpredictable or uncontrollable autonomous weapons systems, capable of using force without meaningful human control and prohibits those designed or employed to apply force against persons, while implementing regulations for other forms of autonomous weapons systems. This instrument should be negotiated through a process that is transparent, inclusive and open to all stakeholders.

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