

Statement by New Zealand

Agenda item 5(e): Possible options for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention without prejudicing policy outcomes and taking into account past, present and future proposals

- Thank you Chair.

- New Zealand has recently made two joint submissions to the GGE as part of a cross-regional group. Ireland reported on the most recent submission on Tuesday, which was also submitted on behalf of Austria, Brazil, Chile, Luxembourg and Mexico. This submission, like our previous group submission last September, contains some suggestions for a framework on emerging technologies in the area of LAWS that we hope would be able to find consensus support.

- In particular, there seems to be broad support within the GGE for the key idea underlined in our submissions that compliance with relevant international law requires context-specific value-based judgment by a human, which must not be substituted by autonomous machines or systems.

- Our joint submissions have also supported the development of a transparent, process-oriented normative and operational framework for the evaluation of emerging technologies in the area of LAWS, to help ensure that these weapons are only ever developed, deployed and used in conformity with international law. In terms of substance, the group has emphasised that such a framework should encompass the following three types of considerations:
 - First, contextual considerations around whether the system can accurately read the operational context;

 - Second, technical considerations around whether adequate limits on tasks, targets and the environment are in place;

 - Third, considerations around human-machine interaction, including whether meaningful human control is exerted over the critical functions of the weapon to ensure the necessary context-specific value judgment required to apply rules and principles of

international law, and whether such human control allows for supervision and intervention where necessary, for example to prevent the system redefining its mission or to deactivate autonomous functions.

- As highlighted in New Zealand's previous comments under agenda item 5(c), it seems to us that, in terms of the structure of our future work, there is within this GGE widespread support for a two-tier approach of prohibitions on certain types of AWS together with positive obligations governing the other kinds of AWS. Structuring our discussions in this manner could prove to be a useful way forward, without prejudicing specific policy outcomes (including which weapons systems would fall into each category) or other past, present and future proposals.
- Finally, Mr. Chair, New Zealand also wishes to register our strong support for updating this Group's mandate to ensure that it has the best possible chance of making the progress we need. It is very clear that, given the pace of technological developments, time is of the essence – regulation cannot be deferred for much longer if we are to have genuine options for control. Meanwhile, the pace of progress in this Group to date has been slow. We hope the Group can rise to the challenge before us and demonstrate that it is able to agree on a new mandate which would both reflect that some progress *has* been made in the past five years, while also directing us forward towards more intensive and focused negotiations.

NZ disarmament statements online, www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm