



DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA
Permanent Representative of the Delegation of Japan
at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on
Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
16 November 2022, Geneva

Mr. Chairperson,

With the development of emerging technologies, the international community's attention to lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) is increasing more than ever before. International Humanitarian Law, which aims to prevent unnecessary sacrifice and damage, and to protect all persons not directly taking part in hostilities and victims of armed conflicts, has become even more important within the current severe security environment.

Japan will continue to work towards clarifying the normative and operational framework pertaining to LAWS, actively and constructively participate in international rule-making, and contribute to discussions, while taking security and humanitarian considerations into account. From this perspective, Japan, together with Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States, submitted a joint written proposal titled "Principles and Good Practices for LAWS", calling for the preparation of guidelines and a collection of good practices that can withstand practical application, in order to promote concrete discussions on the application of International Humanitarian Law to LAWS. Our proposal not only serves as a potential deliverable for the GGE on LAWS next year, but also contribute to the advancement of discussions on areas where

consensus has not yet been reached, such as the characteristics of LAWS, through practical examination by the GGE of whether existing rules are inadequate and, if so, how they should be supplemented.

Many other countries also submitted significant proposals at this year's GGE. Such diverse inputs are welcome as they will enhance the quality of discussions. Japan believes it important for the GGE to carefully analyze each country's proposal and identify consensus elements.

Japan believes that there is currently no consensus on the immediate commencement of negotiations of an LBI on LAWS. However, the "Roadmap toward New Protocol on Autonomous Weapons Systems" proposed by a group of ten countries, includes many elements beyond this point that indicate a common understanding has been fostered beyond the principle standpoints of the countries, including on the utility of weapons reviews and proposals for risk mitigation measures. We think that these points will serve as one of the foundations for future discussions.

We consider that the proposal from the United Kingdom will also be useful to advance the GGE discussions, as it presents a specific structure and perspective for preparing a document or manual to contribute to ensuring effective application of International Humanitarian Law. As for the working paper submitted by Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden, we observe that it focuses on prohibiting fully autonomous weapons systems, while only restricting other autonomous weapons systems, or what it calls "lethal weapons systems featuring autonomy", within the scope of International Humanitarian Law. The approach based on two categories for prohibition and restriction, while taking into account both security and humanitarian necessities, is indeed useful. This approach based on the two categories for prohibited and restricted weapons systems is also common to our P&GP proposal. We

hope that, as the proposal is further examined, deliberations within the GGE will advance through discussions on the definition and characteristics of fully autonomous weapons systems, and what the appropriate level of human control would be. Working documents from other countries also contribute significantly to the discussions in the GGE and we would like to further comment on these proposals at future meetings.

Mr. Chairperson,

The discussion concerning LAWS is complex and involves diverse issues. We should commend ourselves on the achievements made by the GGE despite the challenges, including the 11 Guiding Principles and further constructive and concrete discussions based on numerous working papers. Formulating rules by consensus in the CCW, a framework in which 126 countries including major states participate, is the best way to ensure the effectiveness of such rules. We now need to look at each other's proposals from a realistic perspective and accelerate the process of consensus-building. It is important to focus on the commonalities among the proposals rather than focusing on whether the outcome is legally binding or not. From this perspective, we commend the recent initiative led by Austria at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly to deliver a joint statement on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which was joined by 70 countries, including Japan, as part of efforts to build consensus.

We believe that the GGE will continue to be an important venue for fostering a common understanding and international rule-making on LAWS. Japan strongly hopes that the GGE will have a sufficient amount of days in 2023 for substantial and constructive deliberations towards clarifying the norms and operations related to LAWS. Japan will not spare any effort towards the formulation of rules that ensure universality. Please

be assured that we will continue to actively contribute to the discussion pertaining to LAWS.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.