



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal
Autonomous Weapons Systems**

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Leonardo Bencini,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Geneva, 4 March 2024

Chair,

At the outset let me express appreciation for the preparatory work you have conducted that allows us today to start this debate again in a concrete manner on one of the most topical and sensitive issues in disarmament. You can count on our delegation's full support to achieve meaningful results. Let me also thank the previous Chair of the GGE, Ambassador Damico, for having steered the Group through such complex issues, leading us to a point from which it will be easier for us to move forward towards a satisfactory, consensual outcome.

Chair,

Technology is advancing much faster than multilateral negotiations. As G7 Presidency, Italy has set as one of its priorities the issue of emerging disruptive technologies (EDT). As the definition implies, these technologies pose multifaceted threats that demand attention and careful consideration. This is why it is extremely urgent to keep pace with these technological advances by developing the right normative framework, one that is broad enough to also cover developments in these technologies that at this moment we can only partially foresee.

We have been debating the issue of LAWS for seven years now and we can confidently state that the issue is much clearer now as are the risks. We have also seen areas of convergence progressively expand, as was clear during the previous mandate of this GGE and in the report adopted in May 2023. For instance - thanks also to the very precious contributions from organisations such as the ICRC and civil society - it seems

to us that there is a growing understanding on the two-tier approach based on the prohibition of those systems that cannot comply with IHL and regulate those with autonomous features.

Italy has always been committed to making concrete progress on these issues. We have co-signed a Working Paper for consideration of this Group together with five other countries, providing concrete elements for a future instrument.

This is indeed the goal that we have set ourselves – an instrument within the CCW that reaffirms the applicability of IHL, builds on the work conducted so far – including the 2019 Eleven guiding principles – characterizes and defines the systems, prohibits some of them and regulates others, foresees mitigation measures and technical safeguards and creates mechanisms for consultation and cooperation.

Our goal now should be to work as concretely as possible on those elements, with a view to agreeing on them by the end of 2025.

I thank you, Chair.