



Permanent Mission of Italy to
the Conference on Disarmament

**Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on
Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)**

31 August – 4 September 2026

Paragraph 25

Thank you, Chair, for providing us with these additional suggestions and for allowing me to comment on this paragraph. The mandate of our Group “to further consider and formulate, by consensus, a set of elements of an instrument” is arriving at the end and we are pleased to have witnessed growing convergence over these three years which will hopefully allow us to narrow final gaps and adopt a final report by consensus on Friday.

As we have underlined on previous occasions, we consider that a lethal autonomous weapons system is one which, once activated, can identify, select, and engage targets without further human intervention—thus implying the use of “autonomy” across all the three critical phases. We believe that maintaining this formulation brings us closer to a consensus definition.

With regard to sub-paragraph A, we can endorse the addition of the clause: “a system is not included in this characterization when the personnel planning, deciding upon, or carrying out the attack determines the specific target or specific group of targets to be engaged by the system.” This wording appropriately limits the scope of the new instrument to cases in which human operators do not intervene in defining the objective.

Regarding sub-paragraph B, we continue to support a text which specifies that a system which is lethal by nature cannot be excluded from characterization, even

when used to damage objects or inflict injury, or when it requires initial parameter input from an operator. We view this as a balanced and pragmatic compromise, consistent with the discussions held over the past year, which offers a constructive way forward by deferring detailed characterization to the future negotiation of the instrument among the High Contracting Parties.

We would encourage applying this same approach to the final paragraph, by postponing a potential exclusions of specific weapon systems—to subsequent negotiation phases.

Thank you, Chair

Paragraphs 26-34

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

The application of international humanitarian law to lethal autonomous weapons systems lies at the core of our discussions and is among the most relevant issues to be addressed in a future instrument.

In our view, existing international law—particularly the rules of international humanitarian law governing the choice of means and methods of warfare, as well as the specific treaty and customary rules prohibiting or restricting certain weapons—fully applies to new weapon technologies.

Our delegation has no comments on sub-paragraphs 26 to 33. We consider this section to be solid. In particular, sub-paragraph 30 further strengthens the protection of civilians, going beyond the CCW by reflecting common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. It also reaffirms that, even in cases not explicitly covered by the CCW, the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience continue to apply, protecting civilians and combatants in accordance with customary law, the principles of humanity, and the dictates of public conscience.

With regard to sub-paragraph 34, we have some uncertainty concerning its interpretation. We would therefore favour either its deletion or the replacement of “LAWS that cannot be used” with “LAWS which are incapable of being used”.

Thank you, Chair.

Paragraphs 36-38

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor and allowing me to comment on these paragraphs.

With regard to paragraph 36, we note the suggested inversion from “human judgement and control” to “control and human judgement” to allow for indirect forms of control while still preserving opportunities for human judgement and guaranteeing accountability. Although we would have preferred the simpler, concise wording you used in the earlier draft of the rolling text, we are prepared to show flexibility and accept this change as part of a package, together with the second sentence of this para.

Regarding paragraph 38 A, we support the current wording focused on the responsible chain of command and control, which determines and evaluates, on the basis of a legal assessment, the effects of a target identification, selection and engagement, taking into account the operational context, as well as the reference to “*ethical considerations*”, drawing inspiration from the Guiding Principles.

We also support sub-paragraph B, which establishes the responsibility of the relevant entity to limit LAWS effects thought appropriate operational constrain, including inter alia restriction to the scale of operation, types of targets, duration, and geographical scope. We favour the removal of the reference to the “number of engagements”, as, in our assessment, this criterion would not constitute an effective form of control and could, in practice, result in the proliferation of systems.

Regarding sub-paragraph C, we deem it relevant, as it relates to human intervention in the event of significant changes to mission parameters, limiting the use of AI systems—which self-learn after activation and could independently modify human-entered mission parameters rising the risk of unintended engagements. Finally, we

encourage retention of sub-paragraph D, which provides for the inclusion of automatic/manual deactivation systems for additional protection.

Allow me to conclude by underlining that we regard these paragraphs as of paramount importance and we hope that we can narrow the remaining differences in the conference room by the end of this week.

Thank you, Chair.

Paragraphs 39-48

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor and allowing me to comment on these paragraphs.

With regard to paragraph 39, we support the current formulation, which emphasizes the need to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law through legal review mechanisms applied throughout the entire life cycle of lethal autonomous weapons systems, including in the event of any significant changes affecting their core functions.

With regard to paragraph 40-A, we remain flexible. We support the new formulation while remaining open to possible simplification of the text. At the same time, we consider it necessary to retain the reference to testing and evaluation, including simulations reflecting the operational environment, prior to employment.

With regard to subparagraph 40-C, we consider it important that LAWS perform all their primary functions in a predictable and reliable manner, and that their functioning and effects be traceable and explainable. We welcome the current rephrasing and remain flexible. In our view, traceability and explainability are important safeguards for ensuring responsible use and accountability, and for preventing unintended engagements. In addition, understanding how an autonomous system operates and reaches an outcome helps those responsible for its development and use to identify potential biases, assess their implications, and

take appropriate measures to prevent and mitigate them. Furthermore, explainability is necessary to mitigate unintended bias.

We recognize that these terms and the related legal considerations are understood differently and do not yet command consensus in the room. Nevertheless, we remain flexible and ready to work towards a formulation acceptable for all delegations.

Thank you, Chair.