

UK ATTENDANCE AT LAWS GGE 21-25 SEP 2020

Opening Remarks

Mr Chairman,

- Thank you for all your preparation and Chairmanship of this meeting. The UK is pleased to see this discussion on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems take place. The UK particularly recognises the importance of being able to continue to discuss this issue and appreciates the efforts undertaken to enable this within the constraints of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We must be proactive and flexible, working together to maintain progress in this important area.
- The UK believes that these discussions are relevant and timely, and that the CCW is the right forum to bring together the most relevant expertise to discuss this issue. The GGEs have made important progress and it is right that we are convening again. The challenge we collectively face is how to operationalise the Guiding Principles and develop and agree recommendations for the normative and operational framework. Many, including ourselves, have shared their commentaries on how to achieve this. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ambassador Janis Karklins for all of his efforts thus far in achieving the progress that we have made, including on the commonalities paper, and the current Chair for taking forward this and the national commentaries initiative.
- At this point, the UK wishes to reiterate its policy on LAWS. We have no intention of developing systems that could operate without any human control. The UK is committed to ensuring its weapons remain under human control. Further to this, we wish to restate our view that International Humanitarian Law and the existing regulatory framework for the development, procurement and use of weapons systems remain more than sufficient to regulate new capabilities.
- The UK acknowledges that the current modalities are not ideal. These meetings benefit from the participation of multi-disciplinary teams of experts able to interact with each other; but in the current circumstances we recognise there was no

alternative but to continue as best we can, and we thank the Chair and Secretariat for their efforts to support us in doing that.

Mr Chairman, we look forward to five days of fruitful discussions under your leadership, and to maintaining progress as we approach the 2021 RevCon and beyond; you have our full support. Thank you.