



Permanent Representation
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

National Statement by Germany

Group of Governmental Experts

on “Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons
Systems (LAWS)”

3 – 13 August 2021

delivered by

Ambassador Peter Beerwerth

Mr Chair,

Excellencies, colleagues,

- **Germany welcomes the opportunity to contribute in its national capacity to the discussion during this first official meeting of the GGE on LAWS in 2021. From our point of view, our direct exchange will greatly contribute to preparing the substantive, constructive and results-oriented discussions at the 6th CCW Review Conference later this year.**
- **First, let me underline that it is key to us, as expressed in our national commentary on operationalizing the Guiding Principles submitted in June 2020 and in a joint paper by a cross-regional group submitted in September 2020, to collect consensual elements in the legal, military**

and technological aspects for an effective and universally agreed framework.

- **We continue to be very encouraged by the converging views on the substance of the issues at hand that particularly have come to light in the written and oral contributions by the different High Contracting Parties.**
- **Building on this, Germany together with France has submitted a joint paper which provides a possible outline for the normative and operational framework. To underline this bilateral approach, we have presented it in a common statement earlier this week.**
- **It should foresee, from our perspective, first and foremost a commitment by the High Contracting Parties not to develop, produce, acquire, deploy or use fully autonomous lethal weapons systems operating completely outside human chain of command and control. These fully autonomous systems are defined by not fulfilling the set of requirements defined by the positive obligations spelt out below. At the same time, we therefore find it necessary that the High Contracting Parties agree on positive obligations, as has been noted at previous occasions: Lethal weapons systems featuring autonomy must only be developed, produced, acquired, modified, deployed and used in accordance with a number of provisions, such as**
 - **compliance with international law,**
 - **preservation of human responsibility and accountability at all times, in all circumstances and across the entire life cycle;**
 - **Retention of sufficient human control during the whole life-cycle of the system, and**
 - **adoption and implementation of tailored risk mitigation measures and appropriate safeguards regarding safety and security.**

- In order to operationalize these obligations, human decision makers and operators need to have sufficient knowledge about the systems' operation and actions, the operating environment and the likely interaction between these factors. They have to be continuously able to exercise control over the weapons systems and must remain the essential element in this interaction bearing the overall responsibility.
- The weapons system, once activated, needs to act in a predictable and reliable manner in order to ensure that its actions are entirely in conformity with applicable law, rules of engagement, and the intentions of its operators or commanders. No weapons system may, on the strength of its algorithms, change the pre-defined mission parameters, or entail the risk of overriding a human de-activation command.
- The required level of human control depends on the operational context and the characteristics and capabilities of a weapons system. Temporal and spatial restrictions or limits need to be applied to the operation of any such weapons system.
- We hope that our proposal for a structure and for elements of the normative and operational framework will further our discussions in the GGE.
- With a view to a meaningful outcome of the RevCon in December it will be crucial to achieve a consensual result of our deliberations on LAWS. We therefore sincerely hope for substantial and constructive discussions within this and the following meetings of the GGE.