**Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems**

General Statement by Sweden

Geneva, 3-13 August 2021

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me begin by congratulating you on the appointment as Chair of the GGE LAWS and express Sweden’s appreciation for the work you have already undertaken. My delegation stands ready to support you in our work ahead.

The ongoing pandemic has had a negative impact on the GGE and the possibility of carrying out much needed work. However, despite such challenges and through cooperation and collective efforts, the discussions have been able to continue to make headway.

While some pandemic related restrictions have been lifted, many are still in place, including some related to travelling. In light of such circumstance, and in order to promote access and participation by all High Contracting Parties, observers, experts and representatives of civil society, Sweden is of the view that the deliberations of the GGE would have benefitted from the possibility of virtual participation.

Nevertheless, Sweden is pleased that this meeting is able to take place as scheduled – the first sessions since September 2020. We believe the current meeting will allow the GGE to make progress in a pragmatic yet ambitious manner. In doing so, we should continue to be guided by the substantive achievements already made, such as the 11 Guiding Principles and the consensus conclusions adopted by the GGE.

In this regard, Sweden would like to reaffirm that:

* International Law continues to apply fully to all weapons systems, including LAWS.
* Weapon systems which cannot be deployed and used in full compliance with International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, are inherently unlawful.
* Humans must at all times be responsible for decisions on the use of force. Such responsibility cannot be transferred to machines and must be maintained throughout the entire life cycle of the weapons system.
* Meaningful human control needs to be maintained over all weapons systems, ensuring that the use of such systems is in compliance with International Law. In determining the type and degree of human control necessary consideration must be given, on a case by case basis, to a range of factors such as weapons characteristics, the environment in which the weapons are deployed and the situational context, including temporal and spatial limits.

Furthermore, Sweden believes that it is important to continue to integrate a gender perspective into the work of the GGE and to promote equal participation by women and men in discussions and negotiations as well as to further examine how to mitigate possible gender differentiated impacts resulting from the use of LAWS.

Going forward, the GGE needs to continue to examine and clarify the type of normative or regulatory framework needed to effectively address issues related to emerging technologies in the area of LAWS. The GGE should also further explore how weapons reviews can be enhanced and universalized. Weapons reviews are an essential framework to identify risks associated with LAWS and ensure that weapons systems are in complinace with International Law.

In closing, and as we approach the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons it is Sweden’s view that the CCW remains a relevant and effective forum to respond to future weapons technology developments. As such, it also continues to be the appropriate forum for dealing with issues related to LAWS, allowing for a richness of perspectives to be presented and discussed in an open and inclusive manner. Sweden is therefore in favour of extending the mandate of the GGE in order for it to continue its important work.

I thank you.