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Statement by

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Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Main Committee II

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Madam Chairperson,

Israel is of the view that the CCW continues to be the most appropriate forum to discuss future Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, since it hosts the most relevant actors in this context and strikes a balance between military necessity and humanitarian concerns. Discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts over the past years, were insightful, enriching, useful, and contributed to a greater understanding of this complex issue. We would like to thank Ambassadors Gil, Gjorgjinski, Karklins and Pecsteen for their work as Chairpersons of those meetings during the last five years.

As a result of these discussions, we were able to deepen our collective understandings, including by agreeing and endorsing the 11 guiding principles in 2019, as well as reaching additional prominent insights that are reflected in the GGE reports over the years. We consider this a noteworthy achievement and a strong foundation for our future work. We note that we have been able to reach agreement on certain notions, such as the notion that existing IHL fully applies to the development and use of LAWS and the importance of retaining human responsibility for the use of LAWS.

However, at the same time, as we all know, substantial questions still remain and require further deliberations, and there is difference of opinion concerning additional outcomes that should potentially be reached. In this regard, it is Israel’s position that existing IHL is a sufficient legal framework for any future use of LAWS, and a new legally binding instrument is not required. This is similar to the positions stated by other delegations.

Madam Chairperson,

Considering the many unknowns and divergent views on LAWS, as well as the dynamic nature of the technology that we are discussing, it is our view that an incremental and realistic approach is preferable. We believe continuing our discussions on further clarifying how IHL applies to LAWS would be a useful way forward, as part of the discussions on the applicable normative and operational framework. Other issues that
could be further explored, are national legal weapon reviews, human-machine interaction at various phases of the weapon's life cycle, as well as human responsibility for the use of emerging technologies in the area of LAWS.

Madame Chairperson,
Israel would like to reaffirm its position that human judgment will be an integral part of any process regarding emerging technologies in the area of LAWS, and that it should be applied at various stages of the life-cycle. Furthermore, we believe that technology should not be stigmatized, and that LAWS offer potential benefits in compliance with IHL, including by the protection of the civilian population.

Madam Chairperson,
Israel would like to express its opinion that the Chairperson’s summary, Annex III, does not reflect the discussions held during the GGE meetings, and the divergent views that were expressed regarding the content of that document. In this regard, Israel’s view is that using the Chairperson’s summary as a basis for future discussions would not be a constructive way forward.

Finally, Madam Chairperson,
Israel attaches great importance to continue the work on LAWS in the CCW. Israel looks forward to continuing the discussions and working together, in the framework of the CCW, towards widening our collective understandings.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.