Sixth Review Conference of the
Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)

General Statement
by Finland
Geneva, 13 December 2021

Distinguished Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your nomination as the President of this Review Conference. I wish you my delegation’s full support in your work.

Finland is fully aligned with the statement (to be) made by the European Union and I am making some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Finland remains strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, and pursues to promote their universalization and compliance with them. The CCW is a unique international forum that brings together expertise from diplomatic, legal, and military domains, and enables us to address a broad spectrum of issues - both long standing as well as newly emerging.

Landmines, improvised explosive devices and other explosive weapons continue to be a grave and longstanding challenge around the world, also related to terrorism. Rapid advances in technology, especially in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), urgently call for our attention and normative action.

Humanitarian aspects and the protection of civilian populations must be the underlying principle in all that we do, both in conventional weapons, and when we address new emerging technologies.

Finland promotes a global regulation of lethal autonomous weapon systems and, in relation to that, monitors the use of Artificial Intelligence in arms technology. International regulatory framework must keep up with the technological development. We need mutually agreed rules and we consider that the CCW is the relevant international forum in this regard.

The rules and regulations of international law must be complied with under any circumstances, also when developing and using new arms technologies. With regard to LAWS, Finland underlines strict compliance with international humanitarian law and other obligations under international law. International humanitarian law applies to all arms categories. Legal and ethical considerations cannot be transferred to machines.

Fully automated weapon systems operating totally beyond human control must not be developed even in the future. We note with regret that the last session of the GGE LAWS did not reach consensus on a final report, including, in particular, consensus recommendations. Nevertheless, we would like to express our gratitude to the GGE Chair, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen and his team for their tireless work and efforts which allowed the GGE to conduct important discussions over broad range of aspects of emerging technologies in the area of LAWS.
We remain committed to pursue efforts in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) based on a strong mandate with a view of ensuring compliance with International Humanitarian Law. We expect the CCW to make progress and deliver tangible results.

Given the complexity of the issue, rapidly developing multi-purpose technology basis, and its wide effectiveness over the core mechanisms of modern armament and warfare, we must be patient but remain focused to further work. We remain confident, that there is potential for a wider consensus, once our understanding and conceptual means build up in the LAWS-process.

Regarding Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and the protection of civilians, we would like to express our support to conduct further focused deliberations in the framework of the CCW.

Finally, we would like to highlight the importance of operational sustainability of the CCW. Important work has been achieved over the years and in order to be able to sustain these achievements and build foundation for new ones, the role of the Implementation Support Unit, meetings of the States Parties as well as expert meetings is crucial.

Sustainability of this successful structure is at risk if adequate financing is not provided. We therefore call on all the States Parties to take care of their financial commitments in a timely and professional manner. We welcome the proposal to establish a Management Board as a working group, pursuant to Article 37 of the Rules of Procedure, to provide oversight on financial matter as well as on other matter related to the ISU.

I thank you, Mr President.