

Mr. President,

My delegation is taking the floor on behalf of the delegations of Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, and my own country Switzerland.

President,

1. After considerable debate, Main Committee II adopted its report this week. The outcome includes a number of elements on LAWS in the solemn declaration and a mandate for the future work of the GGE.
2. First, we wish to put on record that the conclusion of the work of the GGE last week disappointed us deeply.
3. Over the past five years, the GGE has made progress on framing issues around “lethal autonomous weapons” (LAWS), including the endorsement of 11 guiding principles by High Contracting Parties. Progress on substance was particularly significant in the GGE this year, but we failed to capitalise on it despite the best efforts of Ambassador Pecsteen, whom we wish to thank.
4. A key understanding reached from our work so far is that autonomous weapon systems which cannot be used in compliance with international humanitarian law, are de facto outlawed and their use must be prevented.
5. However, it is abundantly clear that the GGE’s results to date are not sufficient to address the urgency of this issue. At the present rate of progress, the pace of technological developments risks overtaking our deliberations.
6. This year, our task was to collectively develop consensus recommendations on the normative and operational framework with respect to LAWS. The inescapable conclusion is that the GGE fell short of those goals.

7. We are of the view that the GGE mandate for 2022 should have been clearer and more ambitious. Our delegations welcome the fact that the GGE will continue its work, and our delegations will spare no effort to ensure that it achieves substantive progress. Our work must be productive and develop effective responses to the challenges autonomous weapons systems pose.
8. We recognise that convergence takes time to develop in the CCW. We also acknowledge that consensus, for instance, on which autonomous weapons should be regulated and how, has not necessarily emerged yet. Regardless of our specific differences on substance, or on the alternatives before us, it is in all of our interests to demonstrate that the CCW can deliver. To that end, our delegations are determined to work together in the spirit of transparency and multilateral cooperation to achieve a comprehensive outcome commensurate with the topic's urgency. We are hopeful that our common efforts will yield clear results.
9. Simply repeating the discussions we have already had at previous GGEs does not do justice to the work already completed or the task at hand. Nor should the consensus practice of this forum be abused. Those who would invoke it to protect their positions should do so responsibly and seldom, and only when all other avenues are exhausted.
10. Most of all, we must ensure the human element in the use of force remains central, and inform and guide the future work of the GGE to both strengthen and protect the integrity of international humanitarian law.

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