



**CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
Geneva (13-17 November 2017)**

**Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

General exchange of views

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me express my deep appreciation for your appointment, and thank you for the useful food-for-thought paper and for the way in which you are conducting our discussions. I can assure you of my delegation's full cooperation towards a productive outcome of this GGE session.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy has consistently supported the CCW as the natural forum to explore the features and implications of LAWS, due to its inclusion of diplomatic, legal, and military expertise as well as its openness to the input of civil society and research institutions.

For this reason, Italy greatly appreciated the discussions held during the Informal Meeting of Experts between 2014 and 2016. In parallel a domestic process of inter-agency analysis on LAWS has been put in place in Italy involving also representatives from the private sector.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy considers this Group of Governmental Experts as a further important step to move forward in our work on LAWS.

The Group should allow us to further deepen our understanding of the various aspects relating to this issue, also in the light of current technological developments.

In this regard, the clarification of the object and scope of this debate remains a central step.

We realize that defining LAWS is not an easy task. Nonetheless, a common understanding of what we mean by LAWS, such as a preliminary working definition, in the context of the CCW can be the foundation on which all other elements of the

discussion can be based. In our view, such a preliminary working definition should focus on “fully” autonomous weapons systems.

Currently, in our assessment, such systems do not exist, but their future development cannot be ruled out.

We cannot ignore the possibility that autonomous systems initially designed for the civilian sector may be transferred for use in the military sector or even for illicit goals.

It will also be important to take into account aspects related to remote interference on future LAWS, which could in principle alter their set-up and bypass the degree of meaningful human control applied to them.

We believe there is great value in continuing discussions of the matter in the framework of the CCW, also with a view to monitoring current developments and making relevant decisions.

We also need to strongly reaffirm our common engagement towards the full implementation of, and respect for, the rules and principles of IHL, independently of the specificity of any weapons system.

Mr Chairman,

In terms of the possible outcomes for the GGE, Italy fully shares the views expressed in the Working Paper 4 jointly presented by France and Germany. The proposals outlined in the paper merit close consideration.

In particular, while also not wanting to prejudge the result of this week’s discussion, we agree that the GGE could usefully pave the way for a draft political declaration setting basic agreed principles and lay the ground for further work on the issue.

In order to advance in this direction, we are ready to fully cooperate with you, Mr. Chairman, and work constructively with the other delegations.

Thank you.