



**The 2018 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons  
(Geneva, 21-23 November 2018)**

**Statement by HE Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Consideration of the report of the GGE on LAWS

Mr. President,

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

Mr. President,

Italy has consistently supported the CCW as the natural forum to explore the features and implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems/LAWS, due to its inclusion of diplomatic, legal and military expertise, the balance it strikes between humanitarian considerations and military necessity, as well as its openness to the input of civil society and research institutions.

Our discussions in April and August have been very productive: they shed further light on the different aspects relevant to the LAWS issue, highlighted areas on which common understandings are emerging, and others on which further analysis is needed.

Italy shares the principle, which clearly represents an element of convergence, that any weapon system, existing or future, must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. Human control is essential to ensure compliance with fundamental IHL principles, including the protection of civilian populations.

We also welcomed the shared reiteration that the rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law must apply to all existing and emerging weapons systems, including LAWS. Our engagement towards the full implementation of, and respect for, the rules and principles of IHL must stand firm independently of the specificity of any weapon system. This includes the obligation to conduct legal reviews of weapons, means and methods of warfare, in accordance with art. 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

In light of the great importance of the matter and considering that several elements of the LAWS debate would merit further discussion, we strongly support the renewal of the GGE mandate for 2019. Building on the Guiding Principles agreed in August, we believe that further discussions could usefully continue to analyze the potential benefits of increasing autonomy in weapons systems, possible legal and humanitarian challenges related to their development and use, and how these could be addressed within the existing regulatory frameworks.

Progress in the debate should allow identifying further common understandings, paving the way towards a consensual Political Declaration that sets out clear and agreed principles in relation to LAWS, which we see as a realistic and productive outcome for the Group's work.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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