



**CCW Group of Governmental Experts
on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
Geneva, 25-29 March 2019**

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

**Items 5(c-d)
Potential military applications**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity, addressing both this and the next agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy remains of the view that human control is fundamental to ensure that all weapons systems are developed, deployed, and used in compliance with International Humanitarian Law. In particular, we deem it necessary for the decisions to use lethal force and to produce lethal effects to remain in the hands of human beings. This is due to two main reasons: first, in order to guarantee accountability in the case of IHL violations; second, because only human judgement can perform the necessary assessments relating to the application of the IHL principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.

In the weapons systems currently in use by Italian Armed Forces, human control, in the form of supervision, is applied in all phases of a weapon's life cycle. Human operators are responsible for the validation of selection of objectives (targeting and, in some cases, re-targeting) and/or for the activation/deactivation of the autonomous mode of the relevant system.

The use of pre-programmed systems in contexts allowing for minimal reaction times may present challenges to human control. In operational contexts, the closer is the threat and the more complex it is to exercise such control on every single action of the weapon system. However, the possibility to override or abort is always present.

In principle, the distinction between mobile or fixed weapons systems, constraints on time of operation or on scope of movement over an area are not important from an IHL/CCW perspective. Theoretically, however, one can reasonably argue that mobile systems generate more complex scenarios from the point of view of IHL application, compared to fixed ones. Similar considerations apply to the use of anti-materiel versus anti-personnel weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.