

Statement of Belgium at the GGE LAWS on policy options.

Thank you Mr President.

Belgium aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make the following brief comments in its national capacity.

First and foremost, my delegation shares the sense of urgency expressed by other delegations. It is important that our discussions lead to tangible results.

For Belgium the purpose of our endeavor should be to ensure the prohibition of the introduction of weapons systems which we deem incompatible with legal, humanitarian and/or ethical standards. In our joint paper with Luxembourg and Ireland, we have stated the specific characteristics that we would consider problematic. For Belgium, it is hence important to make further progress on the issue of characterisation.

In previous discussions, a number of States, including Belgium, pointed to the importance of conducting legal reviews of new weapons, in accordance with international law and in particular with article 36 of the

First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions. In our view, this remains a useful and important avenue to ensure that any weapons system is developed in compliance with international law, and in particular with IHL. It is also a safety net that would ensure that certain weapon systems, not be captured in a definition, but not compliant with IHL, would also be covered. The universalization of the legal review of new weapons would be an important step forward in coping with the challenge posed by LAWS. However, as already stated, this is insufficient for Belgium to tackle the challenges related to LAWS. Additional policy options should be considered, within the framework of the CCW. Belgium favors the adoption of a strong political declaration, and/or a dedicated international legal instrument in order to ensure that autonomous weapons systems which we deem incompatible with legal, humanitarian and/or ethical standards are not introduced.

More specifically, and to conclude, Mr President, we deem that autonomous weapons capable of killing without any human intervention would need to be targeted.

I thank you Mr. President.