Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Agenda item: Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

13 November 2014

Statement by Austria

Austria was very pleased with the substantive nature, the multi-disciplinary approach and the inclusive nature of the informal expert meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems in May this year. I congratulate the Chairperson of the expert meeting, Amb. Simon Michel of France, for his initiative and leadership.

This meeting has put a number of important questions and concerns on the table, including on the consequences of the availability of lethal autonomous weapons on international peace and security, the compliance with international law as well as philosophical and ethical questions. Austria considers it important to make progress on these issues and advance the discussions with a sense of urgency and therefore fully supports the convening of another expert meeting in the framework of the CCW in spring 2015. The expertise of civil society, academia and technical experts will render a valuable contribution to the.

For Austria, the deliberations in the CCW and the Human Rights Council during the past year have been important and complementary. They have demonstrated that there are clear boundaries that have to be respected deriving from international law and ethics. Weapons systems without meaningful human control are in contravention to international humanitarian law.
As an interim measure Austria has called on all currently engaged in the development of such weapon systems to freeze these programmes and those deliberating to start such development not to do so.

We expect from hopefully up to 5 days of discussions at an expert meeting next year further clarifications to be reflected in documents, on which we could build upon in the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.