Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to CCW
(13 November 2014, Geneva)
Statement by JAPAN

Agenda 8 LAWS
Thank you, Mr. President,

We would like to once again commend the leadership of France at the informal meeting of experts on LAWS in May this year, which was very useful and informative.
As expressed in our statement this morning, we support the continuation of a discussion on this important issue in the CCW in order to identify future tasks about basic elements related to those weapons.

Mr. President,
We would like to make some general remarks on a couple of key issues related to LAWS, in which our government has special interest.

First, approach to the issue of LAWS. Japan is of the view that the issues related to LAWS should not be deliberated from one aspect or the other, considering that the issues require an in-depth and holistic approach from various perspectives including technical, legal, ethical and military aspects. From this point of view, we highly value the informal meeting of experts in May which dealt with various aspects of the issues, and we would like to suggest that this format of discussions should be maintained in the future discussions.

Second, the issue of a definition of LAWS. We believe that it is imperative to develop a common understanding about what we perceive as LAWS in order to advance discussions, and recognize at the same time that it may be too early to engage in deliberation of the definition at this stage. Therefore, we would like to suggest that a clarification of LAWS should be made at a certain stage after substantial work is to be done.

Third, due consideration for peaceful use of robotics. If LAWS is considered as fully lethal autonomous weapon systems, which once activated, can effectively select and engage a target without human intervention, we understand that peaceful use of robotics lies outside the scope of LAWS. However, as pointed out at the informal meeting of experts in May, the technical components enabling autonomy are similar because of the dual-use nature of such technologies, and therefore, we would like to suggest that discussions on LAWS should be appropriately conducted while paying due consideration to peaceful use of autonomous technology in the civilian field, which is not only useful, but also contribute to a safe and sound life for us all.

I thank you, Mr. President.