Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW
Lethal Autonomous weapons systems
Geneva, 13 November 2014

Statement by Ambassador AHN Youngjip

Mr. Chairman,

Earlier today, under the agenda of a general exchange of views, I already expressed our support for an extension of the mandate of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the CCW. The humanitarian legal problems associated with the deployment and use of fully autonomous lethal weapons would constitute a concern to the Republic of Korea.

This year’s meeting of experts on LAWs, chaired by Ambassador Simon-Michel of France, contributed to forming a broad consensus among the States Parties on the importance of 'meaningful human control' over the critical functions of selecting and attacking targets. Another expert meeting would enable the States Parties to deepen their understanding about the LAWs technology and its related implications. In this regards, we express sincere gratitude to Ambassador Biontino of Germany for volunteering to be the Chair of the meeting next year.

We also support the idea of holding the meetings of experts on CCW Protocols and LAWs back to back. This would be helpful in allowing as many experts from the capital as possible to be engaged in the discussion. Importantly, the meeting needs to be well organized and effectively proceeded.

An expert meeting should not be a simple repetition of similar discussion done this year, but trying rather value-added, building on what we have discussed. In this sense, we appreciate the work done by the CCW Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to upload all the texts of presentations and statements as well as the relevant background documents to the CCW website. We hope that the Chairperson-designate, with the assistance of the ISU, would identify proper sub agenda items and panelists so that we could have a structured and well-informed discussion.
This year's meeting left some room for more clear understanding on several issues, in particular the concept and scope of autonomy as well as the legality and accountability regarding the use of LAWs. The expert meeting should aim at first identifying the key issues related to LAWs beyond minimal common understanding. While doing so, preliminary views and official positions of the States Parties on those key issues may be shared. We need to deal with not only the meaning of "autonomy" but also the concept of "lethality". Also we need to look into LAWs not in isolation but together with the task it performs, the types of targets it can attack and the contexts in which it is used.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to the LAWs expert meeting in 2015. We stand ready to make our contributions to this effort.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.