Chair,

Australia compliments you, the Friends of the Chair, the expert presenters, all those present, and especially the Secretariat, for the last four days. This informal meeting of experts has been skilfully conducted.

Australia is very pleased with the discussions that have occurred this week and believe we have all benefited from the open exchange of knowledge and ideas. We are all that much better placed to continue these discussions. Australia remains fully committed to the CCW process and would support continuing discussing LAWS in this forum.

As Australia noted in its opening statement, the last four days have reinforced the need to thoroughly review all new weapons and weapon system technology against the requirements of international humanitarian law or any rule of international law applicable to the reviewing party. This is even more the case where the technology is evolving, and hence the weapon system characteristics, and how a weapon system might be used during military operations, is far from fixed and even proving elusive of clear definition.

Along with the general customary international law obligation to conduct reviews, Australia is mindful of the requirement for States party to Additional Protocol I to conduct reviews, not just of weapons but also means and methods of warfare. A robust review process remains a key means to ensure legal compliance for weapon systems of all types, noting that many of the concerns discussed this week appear to relate to weapon systems that do not exist. Each particular LAWS, if developed, will need to be assessed against its discrete capabilities and its intended scenarios.

To assist States with the weapon review process, Australia, through its Asia-Pacific Centre for Military Law, has commenced discussions with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the International Committee of the Red Cross to bring the highly regarded ‘Weapons Law and Weapons Review Process Training Course’ to the Asia-Pacific region in 2015 and hope to welcome participation by as many States as possible.

Chair, I thank you for this opportunity for Australia to make this short statement, again compliment you on the conduct of the meeting, and, subject to a decision in November by High Contracting Parties, we look forward to continuing to discuss LAWS in this forum.