Thank you Mr. President for giving us the floor on this very important topic.

Informal discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) have been taking place within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) for the last few years. Based on these discussions we now have a better understanding of lethal autonomous weapons systems; yet many unanswered questions remain, including those that raise fundamental ethical, legal, operational and political concerns.

For Croatia, a key question is whether these new technologies would be compliant with the rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including those of distinction, proportionality and military necessity, as well as their potential impact on human rights and compliance with International Human Rights Law (IHRL). The principle of “meaningful human control” is something that is very important to us because we believe that humans should always bear the ultimate responsibility when dealing with questions of life and death.

We do believe that the CCW, as an important treaty regulating means and methods of warfare, is the appropriate forum to deliberate the issue of LAWS further. We support a more robust mandate in the CCW, which can lead to concrete results and ensure that the challenge posed by LAWS will be adequately addressed. We are therefore in favor of establishing a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that could come up with recommendations for further steps, which could be taken into account at next year’s review conference.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate our position that fundamental questions of life and death cannot be assigned to armed autonomous weapons systems, having in mind the lack of accountability that would exist for the unlawful harm caused by such weapons. It is therefore high-time “to pick up the pace of discussions” and turn words into action.

Thank you.