Statement by the Netherlands

August 2018 Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS

Characterization

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Let me start by thanking you for guiding this complex discussion in such a capable way.

The Netherlands aligns itself with the EU statement delivered earlier today. In our national capacity we would like to make the following remarks.

The Netherlands welcomes the ongoing discussion about characterization of LAWS. In that respect the Netherlands also welcomes the working paper from Finland and Estonia. At the same time, we do not think that a detailed characterization or definition of LAWS based on technological characteristics is a prerequisite to progress with our discussion on emerging weapons systems with increasing autonomous functions. We agree with the chair’s statement that this was one of the insights gained during the discussions of the GGE in April this year.

As mentioned in our earlier working paper as well as earlier statements, the Netherlands has the following working definition for an autonomous weapons system: “A weapon that, without human intervention, selects and engages targets matching certain predefined criteria, following a human decision to deploy the weapon on the understanding that an attack, once launched, cannot be stopped by human intervention.”
However, the key question is how all weapons, including autonomous weapons, remain under meaningful human control. We welcome the growing consensus that this human-machine interaction is key. We are therefore looking forward to the discussions in more detail on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Thank you Mr. Chair.