Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulation on your continuous assumption of Chairmanship to this important meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). I assure you of my Delegation’s full support and cooperation in your endeavor.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe it is important to bear in mind four aspects being highlighted but not necessarily being agreed in the first LAWS GGE last November as summarized by L,A,W and S;

-L : Level of strength of instruments; code of conduct, politically binding declaration, legally binding instrument, or declaration of moratorium. It depends on the scope of instruments. So, the question is how we should approach this.

-A : Approach to the GGE; There are different approaches. Step by step approach or seeking an earlier solution? Focused agenda and prioritizing items to work hard on or rather seeking inclusiveness?

-W : What topics to be discussed; On top of current mandate, dealing with items such as human rights, gender perspectives and other new elements? We have to utilize limited amount of time most effectively in the LAWS GGE process.

-S: Shared understanding of character and concepts related to LAWS; The most important question is to what extent has the international community been developing and deepening a common understanding on LAWS including diversified issues related to technological, military, legal and ethical dimensions?
Mr. Chairman,

Given the volume of our tasks, I will limit my remarks this morning to three critical points,
- Characterization of the systems
- Further consideration of the human element in the use of lethal force
- Potential military applications of related technologies.

My Delegation will make more detailed and substantive interventions under the relevant agenda items in a constructive and hopefully creative manner.

First, characterization

Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), have remarkable potential to improve the quality of human life if it is used correctly, on the other hand, it can be a threat if used incorrectly.

Japan recognizes LAWS as “fully” lethal autonomous weapon systems, and has no intention to develop such a weapon system as already declared in past meetings. LAWS differs from existing weapons in that it has character of having the capability to select and attack targets without human intervention once activated. Moreover, this raises a number of complex challenges, such as the necessity of human intervention, responsibility, compliance with international law, ethical and moral concern, security and dual use nature of technologies. We think that it is important to address these challenges during this GGE.

Second, human elements

As already discussed, we should keep in mind that weapon systems with certain levels of autonomy have potential military advantages for security on the condition that human intervention is guaranteed. The problem is at which stage of operation should human intervention be guaranteed. Moreover, how is “Meaningful Human Control” guaranteed? In this regard, we hope that active discussions on this issue are conducted and such discussions lead towards a common understanding among the international community.

Third, technologies

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As I mentioned, emerging technologies have remarkable potential to improve the quality of human life. Taking into consideration the dual use nature of emerging technologies, it is stressed that our effort should not hamper the progress of research and development in beneficial civilian applications. In that sense, we appreciate the important role of civil society and welcome their participation in this GGE. We think that it is really important to listen to the opinion of civil society and move forward our realistic discussion.

Mr. Chairman,

Please let me express my sincere hope that this meeting will turn out to be most fruitful and insightful. We are confident that you will guide the work of this GGE to a successful conclusion. Japan looks forward to the substantive discussions throughout this week.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.