



**Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA of
Japan**

**The Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the
Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems**

9 March 2022, Geneva

Mr. Chair,

Lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) is an area where the need for further consideration will only grow along with the development of emerging technologies. Japan continues to actively engage in international rule-making and will continue to constructively participate in discussions on LAWS.

The discussion on LAWS is complex and involves a wide variety of issues. Last year's GGE saw differences of opinion on key issues among High Contracting Parties, yet there remain several elements that transcend differences and enjoy consensus, including the 11 Guiding Principles and the relevant parts of the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference. In particular, it is notable that this Final Document includes, for the first time in the history, criteria under which a weapon system in the area of LAWS "must not be used". We hope that this year's GGE will continue to foster a common understanding of LAWS.

Mr. Chair,

It is true that emerging technologies are developing rapidly, necessitating rapid rule-making on emerging technologies in the area of LAWS. While progress toward consensus differs from issue to issue, there are some issues on which consensus is well under way as a result of eight years of discussion

at the CCW; for example, the area of the application of International Humanitarian Law to LAWS.

Mr. Chair,

In order to further crystallise these common understandings and to build upon the past consensus documents produced during the past eight years of hard work, Japan has jointly proposed "Principles and Good Practices on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems", together with Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States. Japan hopes the submission should be officially recorded to serve as one of the bases of our future work.

Mr. Chair,

The proposal is based on the existing adopted documents on the main issues of LAWS, restructures as principles and good practices for weapons systems based on emerging technologies in the area of LAWS. This could be a practical and meaningful deliverable that comprehensively summarizes the discussions held within the CCW over the past eight years, and we hope to begin the interactive work of finalizing the concrete wording of this document as soon as possible, with broad support from all High Contracting Parties.

“The Principles and Good Practices for LAWS” is not a proposal that is inconsistent with the position of pro-regulation countries in that it aims for an outcome that includes more specific regulations. Further, it may lead to clarification of the issues through the identification of various principles and good practices pertaining to LAWS, including the application of IHL.

This will be of value as a reference should LBI negotiations be initiated in the future. While we recognize that some countries are aiming at even more ambitious deliverables, we would like to emphasize once again the need to

proceed with discussions in a steady and constructive manner, one step at a time, in order to achieve effective deliverables.

At the same time, we are open to the other proposals that would also contribute to the advancement towards our common goals. Especially, Japan welcomes the UK's proposal recently presented to the Group.

Mr. Chair,

I fully share your commitment to advance our substantive work at this difficult juncture. Regrettably, the value of this work is seriously called into question by what is now happening in Ukraine. If we are convinced that newly created rules would be soon violated even in a flagrant manner, our work would be reduced to null.

Japan reiterates its grave concern about the catastrophic humanitarian toll taken by Russia's continuing strikes against the civilian population of Ukraine's cities. We reemphasize that indiscriminate attacks are prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. It is indispensable to hold accountable those responsible for war crimes, including indiscriminate use of weapons against civilians, and we welcome the ongoing work to investigate and gather evidence, including by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.