



**Sixth Review Conference of the
Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**

Meeting of Main Committee II Statement

New Zealand Mission to Geneva

14 December 2021

Thank you, Madame Chair.

At the outset let me thank you for presiding over Main Committee II, and assure you of New Zealand's support.

We welcome the opportunity that this specific Committee provides to consider new and developing issues, as a way to ensure the Convention continues to adapt and remains fit for purpose.

Like many other delegations, New Zealand was disappointed about the GGE's inconclusive outcome last week on autonomous weapons systems. It is important that are not complacent about this setback, and that we keep pushing for outcomes to strengthen international humanitarian law and address the very real concerns we have with emerging technologies and applications in the field of autonomy in weapon systems.

Here, I thank Ambassador Pecsteen of Belgium for his tireless chairing. I also wish to reiterate New Zealand's support for the clear direction of travel that was emerging in the GGE under his stewardship: the elaboration of two categories covering prohibitions and regulations on autonomous weapons systems, and an instrument to take this forward. New Zealand, as mandated by our government, will continue to advocate for that instrument to be legally-binding, as the most effective tool available to the international community to address our concerns. In addition, as also decided by my government, and as stated at the GGE, New Zealand is prepared to support other measures that move us along that path in the interim.

In this regard, I note that the efforts of office holders in the CCW process to chart a path forward on LAWS are ongoing. We look forward to seeing these proposals coming out into the light of this chamber as soon as possible. It is a slightly unreal situation that we are in this chamber sharing general views when we know the textual elements are being discussed among selected delegations in smaller rooms.

So that we are clear, New Zealand wishes to echo the view expressed by Switzerland that, as a body of High Contracting Parties, we should not squander the chance to validate some very basic understandings of the work this year.

In that regard, the final document of the Review Conference should reflect the conviction that clear limits must be set on autonomous weapons systems, and in particular that:

- systems not able to comply with international humanitarian law are de facto outlawed and must be prevented; and that
- Other autonomous weapons systems that are not inherently unacceptable under the law should be regulated.

Whatever our specific differences on substance - or on the alternatives before us - it is in all of our interests to do to demonstrate that the CCW can still deliver. Like Sweden and others, we feel the CCW's mandate must be ambitious enough to move on to a more concrete phase of our endeavours and provide for the possibility of elaborating an instrument that can meet the expectations of the vast majority of High Contracting Parties, and of the broader international community.

Thank you, Chair.

NZ disarmament statements online, www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm