

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Czech Republic, let me congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Be assured of our full support to your work.

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union.

We support all the efforts to strengthen and universalize the Convention, as well as the importance of compliance with all CCW provisions and its Protocols. At the same time, we consider the CCW a unique instrument capable of substantially contributing to the implementation of the international humanitarian law by keeping abreast of any new technological advances in weapons technologies.

This capability of the CCW was confirmed by the elaboration of 11 Guiding Principles by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWS) in 2019 and by further progress in the work of the GGE in the following years.

We fully support the idea that the International Law, in particular the International Humanitarian Law and the United Nations Charter, as well as relevant ethical perspectives, should guide the continued work of the GGE. As for the content of the future GGE work, we consider it should be focused on the role of humans in the control over the use of force and their accountability for the weapons systems they operate. Our clear understanding is that the overall responsibility for LAWS should remain in the hands of humans.

Mr. Chair,

The topic of Emerging Technologies in the area of LAWS is not only extremely complex, it also develops with rapid pace, so that it is challenging for decision-makers to stay ahead. That's why we believe that the work of the CCW in this crucial area should not only continue, but also benefit from new inputs that would enhance it. We therefore support the discussions on the creation of new structures that would provide support to GGE's work, such as the group of independent experts and the group of technical experts within the CCW to monitor technological evolutions related to emerging technologies in the area of LAWS and make relevant recommendations.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the GGE Chair, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen, for his tremendous work and dedication which facilitated the GGE's substantial discussions.

The Czech Republic stands ready to contribute to the important work of the CCW in this area.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.