



Statement by Sri Lanka

The First Session of the 2026 CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE on LAWS),

02-06 March 2026, Geneva

Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka also joins other in appreciating you and your team for presenting the updated version of the rolling text. We appreciate your continued efforts in incorporating most of the constructive contributions made by the delegations in previous sessions into the rolling text in a consolidated and inclusive approach. We also appreciate your efforts in streamlining the language and structure of the rolling text while retaining the provisionally agreed contents over the previous discussions.

Sri Lanka perceives that the rolling text contains fundamental elements to serve as the basis for future negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapons systems with necessary improvements through further discussions at this forum.

Therefore, my delegation wishes to comment on the rolling text in a constructive spirit with a view to making the 'rolling text' a clear starting point for future negotiations.

BOX I

Mr. Chair

Moving to Box 1, my delegation welcomes the revised version of the text in terms of clarity and structure which can be further improved during our discussions at this session. Sri Lanka supports reintroducing the critical function of “**identify**” alongside the “select and engage” in characterization of LAWS. We note that ‘identify’ and ‘select’ are two distinct steps in the targeting process and therefore, specific reference in the rolling text is needed.

My delegation is also mindful of the risk of having either an overly narrow text or a too broad text. Therefore, we need to take a balanced approach.

We carefully note the concerns raised by the delegations and ICRC regarding creating an overly narrowing scope by including “identify” in the characterization.

Therefore, it is important to set the explanation in para 1 (A) as a qualifier for “identify” with suitable language to ensure that other common human inputs prior to activation, such as setting the generalized target profiles, the list of potential targets or the operating parameters of the system do not exclude a system from this characterization.

Mr. Chair,

Given the rapid advancements in autonomous weapon technologies, the identification phase could take place at different levels with extremely high-speed with a large number of real-time data compared to what a human can do. Therefore, the autonomous identification function can undermine the human's ability to meaningfully intervene at the subsequent selection and target stages.

Therefore, these aspects need to consider when we deliberate on para 1 (A) of the BOX I.

Thank you

On 03.03.2026

BOX III

Mr. Chair

My delegation is cautious about the removal of paragraph 6 (A) from the previous text of Box III, which ensures that the effects of LAWS are "**predictable, reliable, traceable, and explainable**". We are of the view that, including these terminologies is essential to addressing algorithmic bias and the complexities of deep learning and the “black box” nature of such technologies. We propose reintroducing these specific terms into either Box III or Box IV.

My delegation supports the retention of current paragraphs 1-3 and 5 which come from earlier versions of the rolling text.

Mr Chair,

We have concerns regarding the second sentence of paragraph 4, which permits the retention, acquisition, or transfer of LAWS that do not comply with IHL for training and countermeasure development. As software-driven systems, Autonomous Weapons are not always physically visible or easily countable. Therefore, the traditional regulatory concepts such as "minimum quantity" or "physical destruction" may not be applicable, verifiable and effectively enforceable for LAWS. It is also hard to understand the humanitarian purpose of retention of these weapons compared to the other conventional weapons such as anti-personnel mines. Given the high risk

of proliferation and modification of such autonomous systems, my delegation does not support this sentence.

While strongly supporting the reference to principles of IHL namely, “**distinction, proportionality and precautions**” in para 5 & 6 of the BOX III, my delegation also strongly reiterates the support for continued retention of the **Martens Clause** in para 5 of the BOX II above.

It is also our understanding that the boxes facilitate the structure of our discussion but not the structure of a future instrument. Therefore, the fundamental principles of International Law, particularly the IHL should be fully applied and read together as the underlined framework to govern the full life cycle of the LAWS.

Regarding para 7 C, the concept of "real-time machine learning" is increasingly integrated with techniques such as deep learning, neural networks, and AI-enabled targeting algorithms. Therefore, we believe that the language of para 7 (C) should be further refined to ensure it remains future proof against rapid technological shifts. Additionally, we propose deleting the word "significantly" in para 7 (C) to minimize ambiguity regarding the level of modification that is required for prohibition.

Thank you

04.03.2026

Additional Comments on BOX III

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving my delegation the opportunity to share a few additional comments on BOX III.

In general, Sri Lanka would like to mention that the box III is very important in setting rules to prohibit LAWS which are inconsistent with the international law, particularly with the IHL. While the existing IHL remains a normative framework to govern LAWS, we believe that it is necessary to explore beyond, particularly, a specific legally binding instrument to bridge the gaps and to address the unprecedented challenges posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Further, my delegation wishes to propose inclusion of explicit reference to “**prohibit**” LAWS which are inconsistent with IHL and are used without human control & judgement, in the BOX III.

Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka recognizes and supports the **centrality of human judgment and control** throughout the life cycle of these weapons and we carefully listened to the different views expressed by the

delegations in the room around this concept. My delegation is not fully convinced yet about adding parameters or prefixes to the “human judgment and control” which could risk the compliance with the principles of IHL and create accountability gaps. For instance, in the context of extremely high-speed attacks, where the context could create a situation of “Human-Out-of-the-Loop” and in such situations the term “appropriate” would risk a narrow interpretation as “zero human intervention”. Further, due to the speed of the attack, human could do only “rubber stamp” and such situations would lead to “digital dehumanization”. Additionally, depending on the duration, scope and large volume of data used in an attack, the “human judgement & control” needs to be an active oversight of specific attacks, rather than a one-time authorization. However, understanding the technical and operational aspects of autonomous weapon systems and given the lengthy constructive discussions that we had on this concept over the past sessions as well as during this session, we remain open to consider the views of the delegation until we reach an agreement as to how best we could reflect “human judgment and control” in the rolling text.

Even though we are focusing on legal terms in our work, we believe that the ethical aspect cannot be neglected, as LAWS pose unique and significant ethical implications given the risk of transferring life and death decisions on humans to machines. Therefore, we perceive that reference to “**ethical consideration**” is necessary in the text and we prefer to put it in a stronger formulation in para 7 (A).

Further, my delegation would also wish to express our concerns on the reference to incorporate self-destruct, self-deactivation or self-neutralization in Para 7 (D), without clarity on the context. Also, we note that **self- deactivation option is not an adequate safeguard** or solution for fundamental legal, ethical and security concerns of LAWS.

Thank you