

Declaration
by the Alliance for Multilateralism
on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

The Alliance for Multilateralism calls on states to actively sustain the crucial role of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in securing peace and stability in our times and for future generations.

In view of the rapid speed of technological development in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) the Alliance calls on states to give particular attention to the possible challenges associated with future weapons systems containing autonomous functions. It is of the utmost importance that the production, use and transfer of such future weapons are firmly grounded in International Law and state-control.

We therefore call on states to contribute actively to the clarification and development of an effective and comprehensive normative and operational framework for lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) by the designated group of governmental experts (GGE) within the UN Weapons Convention (CCW).

We encourage states to promote the worldwide application of the eleven guiding principles as affirmed by the GGE and as attached to this declaration and to work on their further elaboration and expansion.

Guiding Principles on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

as consented by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) of the UN Weapons Convention (CCW)

It was affirmed that international law, in particular the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law (IHL) as well as relevant ethical perspectives, should guide the continued work of the Group. Noting the potential challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems to IHL, the following were affirmed, without prejudice to the result of future discussions:

- (a) International humanitarian law continues to apply fully to all weapons systems, including the potential development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems.
- (b) Human responsibility for decisions on the use of weapons systems must be retained since accountability cannot be transferred to machines. This should be considered across the entire life cycle of the weapons system.
- (c) Human-machine interaction, which may take various forms and be implemented at various stages of the life cycle of a weapon, should ensure that the potential use of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems is in compliance with applicable international law, in particular IHL. In determining the quality and extent of human-machine interaction, a range of factors should be considered including the operational context, and the characteristics and capabilities of the weapon system as a whole.

(d) Accountability for developing, deploying and using any emerging weapons system in the framework of the CCW must be ensured in accordance with applicable international law, including through the operation of such systems within a responsible chain of human command and control.

(e) In accordance with States' obligations under international law, in the study, development, acquisition, or adoption of a new weapon, means or method of warfare, determination must be made whether its employment would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by international law.

(f) When developing or acquiring new weapons systems based on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, physical security, appropriate non-physical safeguards (including cybersecurity against hacking or data spoofing), the risk of acquisition by terrorist groups and the risk of proliferation should be considered.

(g) Risk assessments and mitigation measures should be part of the design, development, testing and deployment cycle of emerging technologies in any weapons systems.

(h) Consideration should be given to the use of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in upholding compliance with IHL and other applicable international legal obligations.

(i) In crafting potential policy measures, emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems should not be anthropomorphized.

(j) Discussions and any potential policy measures taken within the context of the CCW should not hamper progress in or access to peaceful uses of intelligent autonomous technologies.

(k) The CCW offers an appropriate framework for dealing with the issue of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems within the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention, which seeks to strike a balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations.