

Statement by Association for Aid and Relief (AAR Japan) to
the Convention on Conventional Weapons Fifth Review Conference
Geneva, Switzerland, December 12, 2016

Thank you, Madam President, for your preparations for this Review Conference and for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Association for Aid and Relief, Japan.

AAR Japan is a non-governmental humanitarian organization that has worked to assist people affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters in Asia and Africa for more than 30 years. We support strong action against landmines and explosive remnants of war to alleviate suffering in Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, and other affected countries. In the field we deliver mine risk education, support to mine clearance, and assistance for survivors. Our main concern is always with people at the grass-roots level, but at the same time we engage in advocacy with partners to end the use of landmines and cluster munitions and respect for the international ban treaties on these weapons.

To avoid another humanitarian catastrophe, we helped to establish the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and have actively participated in the international debate about banning fully autonomous weapons systems. We appreciate the contributions that states have been making to increasing our understanding of this emerging challenge and welcome the support that more than a dozen countries have given to the call for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons to ensure we retain meaningful human control. Yet the process here at the CCW has been too slow with just one week of discussion per year.

We urge states to agree to establish an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts to move to a more substantive process, with a view to initiating formal negotiations as soon as possible. Please dedicate more time to this process next year – the campaign calls for at least four weeks of work in 2017.

During this review conference, we also hope to hear from states on their views, including policy development, as well as their vision for a strong outcome to this work.

As an operational NGO, AAR Japan does not wish to see any victims of killer robots in the future. Our experience from the field shows how support to survivors and their families is possible, physically and economically, but we cannot heal the severe psychological trauma of war victims, which lasts for years. We strongly believe that banning of fully autonomous weapons preemptively would prevent victims. Now is the time for the CCW to act on this serious issue.

Thank you.