



**Regional Conference on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapons
23-24 February, San Jose, Costa Rica**

Concept Note

Costa Rica recognizes that technological advances pose opportunities and challenges in the development of countries. In this sense, artificial intelligence has generated great improvements in the quality of life of human beings, mainly in the fields of health, medicine, transportation, environment and energy. However, this technology is also used in the military field, with the risks that this entails in the field of ethics, law, individual responsibility and the protection of people; autonomous weapons systems may be increasingly easy to replicate and be the object of trade and transfer, generating an additional threat to national, regional and global security.

Meaningful human control over weapon systems is essential and must be ensured in all critical functions of these systems and throughout their life cycle, from their very conception and design. It is necessary to ensure that they possess sufficient predictability, reliability and explainability. It must also be ensure that such devices are compatible with spatial and temporal constraints, so that operators can exercise meaningful human control, ensure law enforcement and avoid technical vulnerabilities.

It is imperative that autonomous weapons systems are developed and used in accordance with International Law, International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law and International Criminal Law.

Costa Rica recalls the need to promptly address the risks and challenges posed by fully autonomous weapons systems, in relation to legal norms and humanitarian and ethical standards, as well as international efforts and commitments in favor of non-proliferation.

Autonomous weapons and regional security

For Latin America and the Caribbean, the development of mechanisms associated with autonomous weapons increases concerns about stability and security. In fact, this is due, among other factors, to the possibility that these weapons may be acquired by non-state actors, who may use them indiscriminately, violating international humanitarian law and violating people human rights in the region.

Therefore, the government of Costa Rica, recognizing the declarations of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region free of nuclear weapons and as a Zone of Peace, will hold the **Regional Conference on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapons systems**.

This conference will bring together governmental experts from Latin America and the Caribbean with extensive legal, technical, operational and ethical experience in the field. It is also invited, as extra-regional observers all other States that are interested to attend this event, as well as relevant international organizations, United Nations specialized agencies, regional agencies and civil society organizations.



The objective of this meeting is to stimulate a common understanding and a more active participation of the Latin American and Caribbean region around this phenomenon and its implications. First of all, it is necessary to recognize that autonomous weapons systems require the development of legally binding norms and principles, including regulations and prohibitions on the development, production, possession, acquisition, deployment, transfer and use of autonomous weapons systems that cannot be used with meaningful human control or in accordance with international law. It is also essential to support and strengthen the legal framework of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

Secondly, it is necessary to analyze more specifically the current trajectory of the development of autonomous weapons, the problems posed by these autonomous weapons systems and their potential social, humanitarian, peace and international security impact for the region; as well as to identify the adjustments required in the current international legal norms. As part of this collective exercise, participants will also be invited to assess a common regional position from a global perspective: how to contribute in terms of response to the challenge that these weapons pose to international security, International Humanitarian Law and the promotion of peace.

The conference, which will be held at the ministerial level, will take place on 23-24 February, 2023 in San Jose, Costa Rica. Regional delegations may consist of one government minister plus two additional delegates. Costa Rica encourages States to include in their delegations the Geneva-based representative participating in the meetings of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Costa Rica welcomes the participation of extra-regional observer States. Extra-regional observer delegations are encouraged to participate with two representatives. Further logistical information will be sent to participants and briefings will be held in January 2023.

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