

**Opening remarks by the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional  
Ammunition**

**Second Substantive Session**

**Monday, 15 August 2022**

**Conference Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**10.00am**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Ineffective conventional ammunition management is a growing concern for the international community. On the one hand, unplanned explosions of ammunition severely affect civilian populations, infrastructure, and the environment. On the other hand — and much more damaging — ammunition diverted to unauthorised users, including criminal and terrorist groups, facilitates, fuels, and accelerates armed conflict and armed violence. Because of the complementary nature of conventional arms and conventional ammunition, national, regional, and international efforts to establish effective control over conventional *arms* will yield full results only when such controls are also extended to *ammunition* as well. Critical gaps, however, remain.

As we collectively move into the second substantive session of the OEWG it is important to stress that this our OEWG is only the latest stage in a process at international level that began in the mid-2000s.

Starting with the 2008 GGE on conventional ammunition in surplus, we have seen growing international attention to the problems associated with conventional ammunition. By conventional ammunition, we mean not just ammunition for small arms and light weapons but also far larger munitions, such as for artillery systems. These larger munitions, when ineffectively managed, pose much more of an explosive threat to national infrastructure and civilian populations than small-calibre ammunition. But also their risk of diversion should not be underestimated, even if it were only as a source for explosive material.

The 2008 GGE led to the development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and to the establishment of the UN *SaferGuard* Programme. These measures represent substantial steps taken to better manage the safety risks posed to states and societies by ineffectively managed ammunition stockpiles. They also provide important guidance for securing national ammunition stockpiles from diversion.

But it has become increasingly clear that ammunition is also subject to diversion *throughout* its life, from the time of its production to the time of its eventual use or disposal. As recent crises demonstrate, ineffectively secured ammunition is in high demand among criminal and terrorist groups—and in the latter case, particularly for the purposes of manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IED).

Our OEWG has been mandated by the General Assembly with the important task of addressing existing gaps in through-life management of conventional ammunition and elaborating a set of political commitments as a new global framework.

Importantly, the Resolution which mandates the OEWG, speaks the new *global* framework as a part of “a *comprehensive* framework” to support safe, secure, and sustainable ammunition management at the national, subregional, regional, and global levels. The word “comprehensive” here, suggests that such a framework should address at all geographical levels the *through-life* management of ammunition—not just to tackle safety issues, but also to address ammunition diversion along the *full* supply chain.

It is important to bear in mind throughout our work, that the *global* framework that this OEWG is elaborating is only *one* layer of this *comprehensive* framework, and that each of the layers will only function at its full potential, if the other layers are factored in when designing each of the layers. So for us it will be of key importance to keep in mind the possibilities of the national, subregional, and regional levels to contribute to the overarching *comprehensive* framework; and equally important: to work with the aim of *also* providing through the *global* framework a good basis for the work at national, subregional, and regional levels

I would like to thank you all for your constructive inputs and your flexibility in enabling this process so far, in particular during the first substantive session at the end of May and the intersessional process. You will hopefully all have seen my main takeaways from the first substantive session that were published on the OEWG website. All of this has allowed us to make good progress and prepare the ground for thorough and in depth deliberations this week, both in formal and in informal mode, on ways to fill the gaps identified.

I appeal to you all to make the best use of the week ahead to move forward the development of the *global* framework in the good cooperative spirit that has prevailed so far, by discussing with each other in the plenary meetings and in the margins. It is important that you make your voices heard in the OEWG process and in addition to speaking out in our meetings, I invite all of you, to make written contributions during this week and after the session.

I remain confident that our goal of more effectively managing conventional ammunition at every level in a safe, secure and sustainable manner will result in a win-win situation for all parties concerned.