

**Draft Statement: BICC**

**OEWG Ammunition  
Geneva 15-19 August 2022**

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**Draft Version: 11 August 2022**

Thank Chair, all protocols observed.

BICC works in close partnerships with Regional Organizations and national authorities mandated to manage national stockpiles and regulate illicit cross-border flows of arms, ammunition and related materiel. Through its long-term advisory programme on arms and ammunition control, a network of technical and strategic advisors have embedded with regional and subregional organizations including the African Union, ECOWAS, RECSA and SARCOM as well as several national entities tasked with arms and ammunition control and DDR. In close cooperation with regional, sub-regional and national partners BICC works towards establishing a more responsible culture of effective weapons and ammunition management as well as countering diversion and the risk of unintentional explosions by building trust, developing necessary skills and promoting information-sharing, transparency and cross-border cooperation where mutually beneficial.

BICC:

→ Strongly supports a coordinated approach to develop a new comprehensive framework on conventional ammunition that addresses the lack of a dedicated international policy forum or regulatory framework on ammunition,

→ Advocates for a comprehensive and coordinated framework that adopts a through lifecycle management approach to conventional ammunition from production to destruction

→ Recognizes the need to address both safety (risk of unintentional munitions explosions and physical security stockpile management) as well as security related risks (specifically, the diversion, proliferation and misuse of conventional ammunition).

→ Beyond robust PSSM measures, BICC recognizes the serious and urgent threat posed by the diversion of ammunition, such as being repurposed as the main charge in Improvised Explosive Devices which continue to exert a high toll on civilians, security forces and peacekeepers in areas where we and our partners operate.

**→ International cooperation and assistance.**

For international assistance and cooperation to be truly effective, national and regional ownership through multi-year, equitable partnerships need to be strengthened. In light of the fact that vastly different skill levels and available resources exist in multiple contexts, priority should be given to practical, tangible, low-cost and high-impact activities.

An adaptable, flexible and tailored conflict-sensitive approach that minimizes harm is essential. To achieve this for conventional ammunition, as with related small arms and light weapons control programming, there is a clearly identified need for generating higher quality research that is data-driven and evidence-based. BICC reiterates the need to regularly monitor national munition stockpiles (including propellant testing and surplus destruction), update regional and national baselines

assessments, establish responsive M & E frameworks and regularly report to international and regional arms control

Coordination and communication need to be drastically enhanced at multiple levels to maximize the use of limited resources, avoid duplication and facilitate identification and destruction of surplus or unserviceable munitions.

**→ Skills development: an essential precondition for SSMA (Regional WAM ToT Approach)**

Longer term, sustainable (and multi-year) engagement/ programming towards developing essential skills and management ability at regional and national levels is a pre-requisite for safe and secure management of conventional ammunition stockpiles while reducing the risk of diversion through better regulation of illicit cross-border flows.

Therefore, In partnership with RECSA and MSAG states, particularly, Germany, Austria, Denmark and the UK - a Regional WAM/ PSSM Train the Trainers was established since 2012. In 2019 the insights and lessons learned from the East Africa programme were used to establish a Regional PSSM Train the Trainers programme in close partnership with ECOWAS and the German Armed Forces Verification Centre in West Africa.

This programme fully complies with the IATGs, MOSAIC and UN SaferGuard best practices, regularly qualifying qualified Regional Instructors to enhance national and regional capacity on both weapons and ammunition management. These Regional Instructors are qualified Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Ammunition Technical Officers with high levels of experience working in complex environments in the region including managing stockpiles during active conflicts and in frontline forward operating bases at high risk of attack or diversion.

Networks established and trust developed over multiple years of cooperation across borders also serve as an effective regional confidence building mechanism, promoting transparency and information sharing as well as communication and cooperation across borders.

There is a need to ensure this process remains active in order to continue to ensure specialised technical skills remain available such as regular monitoring and testing of national stockpiles in order to identify and destroy surplus materiel safely and securely. The Regional ToT programme also serves to strengthen gendered approaches to arms and ammunition control.

**→ Multilevel Approach: HL/Operational**

BICC recognizes the importance of adopting a multi-level approach at regional, sub-regional and national level engagement on cross-border arms and ammunition control.

On one hand we regularly engage high-level stakeholders to enhance their understanding of why improving regulation and control of conventional ammunition is an essential component of a comprehensive arms control architecture, thereby facilitating necessary action within storage units and munition depots.

On the other hand, we work directly at the tactical and operational level with security forces including militaries, police, wildlife services and border forces through both regional and national ToT engagements.

**→ Ensuring effective use of available technology for SSMA**

While not undermining the boots on the ground approach, BICC also recognizes there is potential to make more effective use of increasingly accessible and cost-effective technology as well as supply side and end user controls across the full lifecycle of conventional ammunition (production, import, marking, recordkeeping, identification/tracing and disposal of surplus ammunition. Facilitating implementing at the regional and national level remains a priority for BICC.

**→ Context/ way forward**

BICC recognizes the current GGE Ammunition is not new but an important phase in a continued process that can be traced back to the development of the IATGs in 2008. One of the continuing challenges BICC ---in partnership with regional organizations including the AU, ECOWAS and RECSA -- -seeks to address is operationalizing the IATGs in complex, often conflict-affected and limited resource contexts.

In addition to the IATGs, BICC also supports the design, revision and deployment of practical tools and handbooks such as the SALW and Ammunition Guide, UN Hazard Classification tools, Operational Guidance Notes on management of seized material as well as material recovered in DDR contexts. These tools and training modules are constantly revised to align with the latest version of the IATGs and have been translated into multiple languages including Arabic, French, Amharic towards ensuring their continued utility and universalization.

**→ In conclusion**

BICC remains available to work with our regional and national partners to draft working papers to voice concerns, document testimonies, towards crafting a common position across regions and member states, particularly those most severely affected by the risks of high levels of illicit weapons, ammunition and related materiel including conflict, armed violence, terrorism and organized crime.

BICC supports positions outlined in existing working papers particularly by Germany and Ghana as well as papers submitted on behalf of the Chair as outlined below and in Annexe 1 of our written statement.

- Report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55 on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (29 September 2021)
- Updated overview of the key considerations of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55 Paper submitted on behalf of the Chair\* (29 June 2021)
- Diversion Typology: Paper Submitted on Behalf of the Chair - [GGE/PACAS/2020/3](#)

**END**

## **Annexe 1:**

### **Working Papers:**

- [Ghana \(Priorities for ECOWAS\)](#)
- [Ghana \(Regional Frameworks and Approaches\)](#)
- [Germany](#)
- [Mexico](#)
- [Switzerland, Austria, Montenegro](#)
- [The HALO Trust](#)

### **Chair's Papers:**

- Diversion Typology: Paper Submitted on Behalf of the Chair - [GGE/PACAS/2020/3](#)
- Existing Frameworks Applicable to Conventional Ammunition: Paper Submitted on Behalf of the Chair - [GGE/PACAS/2020/4](#)
- Overview of Key Considerations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus Established Pursuant to GA Resolution 72/55: Paper Submitted on Behalf of the Chair - [GGE/PACAS/2020/5](#)
- Updated overview of Key Considerations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus Established Pursuant to GA Resolution 72/55: Paper Submitted on Behalf of the Chair - [GGE/PACAS/2021/6](#)

### **Note by the Secretariat:**

- Issue of Conventional Ammunition Under United Nations Auspices - [GGE/PACAS/2020/2](#)

**END**