

Statement of Finland, delivered by Mr. Antti Vaaras, Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland in Arms Control and Disarmament

Mr. Chair,

Since we are taking the floor first time during the meeting, I would like first to thank you for chairing this open-ended working group. I thank you also for all the preparations made for this meeting. The draft elements paper is an excellent document, with a good structure to our discussions. Mr. Chair, you can rely on Finland's support.

Firstly, Finland is fully committed to compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and strongly supports the inclusion of ammunition into the scope of the existing arms control commitments, frameworks and treaties. Combatting illicit trade of conventional weapons cannot be carried out effectively without taking into account their ammunition.

We must address the safe and secure through-life management of conventional ammunition comprehensively and at all levels. Problems arising from the accumulation on conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus is one of the priorities we must tackle together, without forgetting the safe and secure storing and accounting of the ammunition.

Secondly, one of the most efficient ways to promote international cooperation and assistance is to support civil society and private sector actors and research institutions, which have a vast experience in ammunition matters. For example, Finland is a steadfast supporter of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in strengthening policy and practice on weapon and ammunition management (WAM). UNIDIR has assisted states, upon their request, in their conduct of the baseline assessment of ammunition management. Finland has supported UNIDIR in the development of ammunition management since 2014.

Thirdly, I would like to add Finland's voice in support of recognizing the different impacts of armed violence on women and girls. Finland has joint the statement on gender mainstreaming and conventional ammunition delivered by Panama. We thank Panama for the initiative. We need to promote the role of women and enhance gender awareness in all arms control actions and the same goes for ammunition. Recognizing the equal role of women and men in ammunition control is much needed and an important element as we work towards a smart and truly inclusive approach.

Thank you for your attention!