

OEWG on Ammunition
(May 23-27, 2022)

Agenda item 5(e): Comprehensive framework to support safe, secure and sustainable through-life ammunition management at the national, subregional, regional and global levels

INDIA STATEMENT

Thank you Mr. Chair.

We had a healthy exchange of views over the last few days of this OEWG. We thank the Chair and the Vice-Chair for leading these discussions. While we would carefully consider the information made available to us during this session, including the expert presentations, I would like to present a few preliminary remarks on the agenda item 5 (e).

2. Mr. Chairperson, we are taking an important step in the area of conventional ammunition. We welcome it and our vote in favour of resolution 76/233 is a reflection of our commitment to this process. While we put our heads together in drafting and recommending a set of political commitments for a new global framework for whole-life ammunition management, let us keep our focus on this matter and not look too far into the future. We strongly encourage that we take a step-by-step approach.

3. Discussion on through-life ammunition management is based on the assessment that there are deficiencies in conventional ammunition management, which go beyond the issues of surplus ammunition. Even when considering management of ammunition across its lifecycle, it would be useful to keep our focus on stockpile management - from both the security and safety perspective - where considerable work has already been undertaken. We should cash in on these gains, as we explore other verticals and horizontals of ammunition management.

4. We would like to re-emphasise that the global framework has to clearly recognise and underscore the sovereign prerogative of each State to assess its conventional ammunition requirements and levels in accordance with its legitimate security needs. There cannot be any dilution on this principle. My delegation would not be in a position to support any commitments, which would create any artificial limits and caps on ammunition quantity or quality available to member states.

5. Any measure to determine the nature and size of surplus ammunition should also be based on the country's own assessment. The framework should not result in any

binding commitments that may compromise this. Similarly, the mechanism for identification of surplus, obsolete or unserviceable ammunition should be nationally driven. It will be unfair to have an external determination of national security needs.

6. While the expectation is that a dedicated framework at the international level could cascade down into regional and sub-regional actions, we must acknowledge that the political and security environment are different in different regions. Hence, participation and cooperation in any regional or sub-regional frameworks must be on a voluntary basis and on the basis free consent.

7. Any future framework on the issue of through-life ammunition should address the issue holistically. Any action expected to be undertaken by member states on ammunition management, particularly from developing countries, cannot be seen in isolation without addressing corresponding technical, legal, financial and technological assistance. This extends to voluntary implementation of IATGs and integrating them into actual practice of ensuring safety and security of ammunition. International cooperation in these areas is essential to help developing countries to transfer the IATGs into practice. The sustainability of such assistance has already been raised by other member states. And I add my delegation's voice of support to it.

Mr. Chair

8. I had indicated earlier that the above is certainly not an exhaustive list. But, as we head into the second and third substantive sessions of the OEWG, we hope the above and other key issues will be given due consideration.

I thank you.
