



Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition

First Substantive Session

23-27 May, New York

MAG Statement

Check against delivery

Thank you, Chair.

MAG is an international humanitarian organisation working in conflict prevention, response and recovery. MAG implements physical security and stockpile management, as well as capacity development activities across Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Middle East and South and South-East Asia. We would like to make recommendations which draw on MAG's experience and expertise.

We welcome efforts towards a set of political commitments that address both safety and security aspects of through-life ammunition management and the 2021 report of the Group of Governmental experts (GGE) provides an excellent starting point for this process.

In addressing safety and security aspects of ammunition, MAG would like to emphasise the inherent tension between the two. For instance, while minimising the impact of unplanned explosions calls for ammunition storage facilities to be at a safe distance from populated areas, storage facilities are often placed close to military units or populated areas to enable close surveillance. Measures to prevent diversion and unplanned explosions should be undertaken simultaneously, but it is important to **ensure that security measures are not at the expense of safety.**

MAG emphasises the need to explore how diversion in **conflict and immediately post-conflict settings differs from non-conflict settings.** Efforts to prevent systematic diversion of ammunition in non-conflict environments will not have the same focus as measures required to reduce the loss of ammunition stockpiles from storage facilities at risk of being overrun. Conflict and non-conflict contexts often occur within the same state, requiring a nuanced and multifaceted approach. Mitigating the destabilising effects of ammunition diversion can contribute to broader armed violence reduction and conflict prevention.

As an organisation that also conducts humanitarian mine action, MAG was pleased to see the 2021 GGE report acknowledges **the risk posed by conventional ammunition that is abandoned or left uncleared as unexploded ordnance.** The political commitments should call on states with explosive ordnance contamination to remove and destroy all forms of explosive ordnance as soon as possible, as these can be diverted or harvested for improvised explosive devices manufacturing by non-state armed groups.

Mr Chair,

International cooperation and assistance will be key to successful implementation of these political commitments. With needs outweighing resources, international cooperation and assistance should prioritise activities that are embedded in **sustainable capacity development** initiatives that provide positive outcomes in the long run and avoid the need to repeatedly fund the same activities in a given context. MAG encourages balanced delivery of cooperation and assistance between conflict and non-conflict settings and across countries and regions. Assistance should deliberately support **gender sensitive and transformative projects.**

MAG welcomes the recommendation of the second Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to support the adoption of **voluntary targets and indicators** at national, regional and sub-regional levels in the form of comprehensive road maps or action plans on ammunition management. Such roadmaps can also help focus international cooperation and assistance.

Many organisations engaged in ammunition management, including MAG, have specialist skills and apply them in different stages in the ammunition lifecycle. We hope this new set of political commitments will create a **collaborative environment to coordinate and exchange expertise across states and specialist organisations that address safety and security risks at different stages in the lifecycle.**

MAG is grateful for the opportunity to feed into this process and we look forward to our continued engagement with the Open-Ended Working Group.

Thanks you, Chair.

ENDS.