



*Permanent Mission of Portugal  
to the United Nations*

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Statement by PORTUGAL  
*Delivered by Mr Jorge Aranda, Minister Counsellor at the  
Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations*

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Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition  
First substantive session

*23-27 May 2022*

Madam Vice-Chair,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement by the representative of the European Union, and I would now like to offer the following remarks in my national capacity.

Allow me to start by commending you on your appointment as Vice-Chair of this Open-Ended Working Group and assure you of the full support of the Portuguese delegation throughout your mandate, to contribute to elaborating a new global framework to address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management.

This objective is of the utmost importance: an ineffective stockpile management may have dramatic consequences, both from a safety point of view – for instance, the risk of unplanned explosions at munitions sites – and from a security point of view – for example, the risk of diversion from ammunition to illicit trafficking.

In both cases, the negative effects are clear, both in terms of sustainable development and in terms of the respect of human rights. Accidental explosions in arms depots can result in the loss of lives and livelihoods, and in environmental damages. And ammunition diverted into the hands of terrorists and organized criminals help fuel armed conflict and violence, including gender-based violence. Ethnic and/or religious minorities are more often the most affected populations.



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On his Agenda for Disarmament, the Secretary-General urges States to regularly assess national stockpiles and identify surplus weapons and ammunition. “Such weaponry”, he considers, “must be perceived as a liability rather than an asset”.

I am sure this Working Group will contribute to addressing these issues. We are not starting from scratch. We are building on the results of the Group of Government Experts that addressed the accumulation of conventional ammunition and on their report from last year. We are also building on the existing national legal systems as well as on regional and international instruments and cooperation frameworks.

Although the management of ammunition stockpiles remains a matter of national responsibility, we are convinced of the importance of reinforcing cooperation among Member States in this area – be it at bilateral, regional or international level.

The exchange of national best practices is a good example of such cooperation, as is voluntary technical assistance, as well as demand-driven capacity building.

Portugal is providing assistance to other countries, in particular capacity building, for instance in the areas of legislative and administrative processes and institutions.

Taking into account the relevant considerations of Resolution 76/233 establishing this Open-Ended Working Group, Portugal fully supports the improvement of the regulation of transfers and the prevention of its diversion into illicit trafficking.

As an EU Member State, Portugal continues to implement common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment, based on the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law in the final destination country.

The Portuguese legal framework reflects our international commitments, as party in Conventions, Treaties and Regimes of arms control and disarmament, and the implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the UN, the EU and the OSCE.

Madam Vice-Chair,

To conclude, let me reaffirm our support to this process and our commitment to further cooperating with you and every delegation towards our common endeavor.