



South African Statement on Agenda Item 5(c) Existing international, regional and subregional frameworks applicable to conventional ammunition, OEWG on Convention Ammunition

25 May 2022

Chairperson

Regarding existing international, regional and subregional frameworks applicable to conventional ammunition.

South Africa agrees with the recommendation that States, regional and subregional organizations and multilateral bodies should consider cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in the development of legally binding instruments or tailored political commitments on a voluntary basis, as appropriate.

In this context, the former Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the African Union, adopted the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons on 1 December 2000. This landmark Ministerial Declaration was the first of its kind on our continent and contains a set of political commitments to be implemented at the national and regional levels to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including ammunition and other related materials. It served to garner African and at the same time broader support in its “call for a realistic and implementable programme of action during the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.”

Within the Southern African sub-region, we had adopted the Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other Related Materials in August 2001 with the objective of combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition and other related materials. The Protocol also seeks to harmonize national legislation across Member States on the manufacture and ownership of small arms and light weapons.

Furthermore, the Protocol addresses issues of operational capacity, making of fire-arms and record-keeping, transparency and information exchange, voluntary surrender of firearms, public education and awareness as well as institutional arrangements for effective implementation of these measures.

The Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCCO) is the primary structure in Southern Africa for the prevention and fighting of cross-border crime, and it is responsible for the implementation of the protocol.

Chairperson,

South Africa is aware, however, that various regional contexts and specific requirements need to be taken into account. Therefore, we believe that the recommendation that political commitments should provide a mechanism to support those regions that voluntarily wish to translate any agreed global-level political commitments and measures into legally binding instruments and tailored political commitments determined by each region or subregion, is appropriate.

The understanding that these political commitments should recognize the importance of existing frameworks and encourage their further development and implementation, is also relevant, as the importance of and centrality of the SADC Firearms Protocol, which includes ammunition and related material for our sub-region, illustrates.

We, therefore, believe that any set of political commitments could prove useful in supporting existing regional efforts, or assist in prompting the development of new ones as determined by the specific needs and contexts, and with necessary support provided by a set of global political commitments and framework.

I thank you.