



**South African Statement for the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition, Second Substantive Session- General Exchange of Views**

**15 to 19 August 2022**

Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to thank you and congratulate you on the commendable work carried out in the First Substantive Session under your leadership. We assure you of our continued support as you guide our work during this second substantive session.

South Africa supported and co-sponsored resolution 76/233 which decided to establish an open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management, including international cooperation and assistance.

During the First Substantive Session, my delegation highlighted the important recommendations from the GGE report that stressed the relevance of filling the global gaps in through-life ammunition management and providing the necessary support and capacity building to states to enable effective global action to address these challenges.

Chairperson,

South Africa remains concerned by the threat posed by the illicit diversion of ammunition in varied contexts such as conflict, crime and terrorist activity, which limits the effectiveness of arms control initiatives and the regulation of flows of conventional arms and ammunition. This is of particular concern on the African continent, where conflict fuelled by such illicit flows are sustained by illicit diversion and where limited capacity of stockpile management also threatens the safety of the population.

In an effort to address these gaps, we therefore, welcome recommendations that a set of political commitments at the global level should provide a mechanism to support those regions, sub-regions and Member States that voluntarily wish to translate political commitments into action such as national systems that monitor and prevent diversion.

On matters related to conventional ammunition safety, South Africa believes that we need to address safety matters related to aspects of production, pre-transfer, transfer, stockpiling, safeguarding, recovery, use and disposal.

In the African context some of the risks that have been identified relate to inappropriately large holdings of ammunition in relation to storage capacity, and mismatch in operational requirements; deterioration of stored ammunition over time, with a reduced shelf life due to environmental conditions; inadequate human resource capacity; inadequate storage infrastructure; and lack of prioritizing the necessary resources to reduce risk.

We welcome the recommendation that states should strive for sustainable ammunition management as part of broader efforts to develop strong and effective institutions in accordance with the 2030 Agenda, as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Chairperson,

It is also of particular importance that political commitments and any framework at the global level should be accompanied by international cooperation and assistance, that fall in line with regional and subregional commitments and national actions. It should also not prejudice national legal systems addressing national ammunition ownership, possession and use, but enable the international community to leave no one behind, recognizing that addressing diversion is only as effective as the capacity of the most vulnerable and susceptible to such diversion globally.

Thank you.