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United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition  
First Substantive Session, 23 – 27 May 2022

**Agenda item 5a: Matters related to conventional ammunition safety  
Addressing through-life ammunition safety, including enhancing applicable measures and  
current limitations**

New York, 24 May 2022  
Statement by Switzerland

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Mr. Chair,

At the outset, Switzerland would like to underline that effective ammunition management requires to take into account both safety and security aspects. In our practice, we consider these two aspects in an integrated manner.

Important progress has been made in improving ammunition safety at the technical level, notably through the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). The development of technical standards or guidelines usually derives from a political or legal framework. The IATG in turn precede a potential framework on ammunition management. In Switzerland's view, the political commitments should refer to the IATG as technical benchmarks for ammunition safety with which States can comply gradually and voluntarily. Besides ammunition safety, the IATG also serve as a reference for certain security aspects.

However, despite considerable progresses over the years, challenges remain:

First, it is not yet universally recognised that shelf-life expired ammunition are an unacceptable risk and not an asset. Similarly, many States still need support to identify and dispose of such ammunition before it becomes a risk for security forces and civilians alike. As the GGE concluded, effective ammunition management entails costs, but these costs are considerably outweighed when considering the costs of unplanned explosions and performance failures. Switzerland believes that the OEWG should address the issue of shelf-life expired ammunition, and the States' capacities to address its related risks.

Second, implementing the IATG is of paramount importance to address safety risks. Switzerland sees a need to further enhance the use of and training on the IATG at the national level. We underline the importance of international cooperation and assistance to that effect. Further supplementary guidance such as implementation tools are also warranted to improve awareness and implementation of the IATG. The political commitments could contribute to the further dissemination of the IATG by recognising their critical function, in full respect with the competencies of the IATG Technical Review Board.

Third, systematic ammunition surveillance is key to detect degrading stability of propellants. In this regard, States need to build the appropriate organisational capabilities, including related structures,

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processes and enabling lines as underlined by the GGE and described in the latest IATG module. International cooperation and assistance remains an essential instrument to support States in building their own capacities in this regard.

I thank you.

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