



**STATEMENT BY TURKEY
FIRST SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION
(23 May 2022)**

Madame Chair,

I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Vice Chair of this Open-ended Working Group on conventional ammunition. Please be assured of Turkey's full support and cooperation to you and the Chair Mr. Von Wittke, while discharging your duties.

I would also like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Chair Mr. Von Wittke to steer our work so far. We hope he will be able to join us very soon.

Madame Chair,

Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

The challenges posed by illicit trade or diversion of weapons is inseparable from the safety and security of their ammunition. As is the case with small arms and light weapons, diversion of ammunition also perpetuates armed conflicts, organized crime, terrorism and gender-based violence, while also undermining development efforts.

In addition, unplanned explosions in ammunition stockpiles and their ineffective management poses a threat to human life. Relevant figures and data demonstrate that this is indeed a global problem of growing concern.

Therefore, it is very timely and pertinent that we focus on how to ensure safe and secure conventional ammunition management in this OEWG through a set of political commitments for a comprehensive global framework. Turkey has been supportive of this process from the beginning, by co-sponsoring the resolution 76/233 and we look forward to its successful conclusion.

We also welcome the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that considered problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, which finalized its work in September 2021.

Madame Chair,

On the security of ammunition, I wish to highlight the linkage between ammunition diversion and terrorism. For decades, Turkey has been combating several terrorist organizations, particularly PKK/PYD/YPG and DAESH. More than 40 thousand lives were lost due to violent terrorist attacks organized by the PKK. All kinds of weapons, from basic firearms to most sophisticated explosives have been used in these cruel crimes. The fact that terrorists use diverted ammunition to easily produce improvised explosive devices points to the growing security threat posed by diversion.

Several operations conducted by the Turkish security forces demonstrate the grim fact that the traffickers and organized criminal groups are strongly linked with terrorist organizations.

Combatting illicit manufacturing and trafficking of arms and ammunition continue to be among Turkey's national priorities. We expect that Member States take all necessary measures to prevent acquirement of all kinds of weapons and ammunition by terrorist organizations.

When it comes to the safety aspects of ammunition, we acknowledge the risks on human life, infrastructure and the environment, stemming from gaps in through-life ammunition management, from its production to disposal and use.

Measures must be taken to prevent unplanned explosions in ammunition stockpiles.

There is also need for effective stockpile management in order to prevent diversion to unauthorized recipients, including criminal and terrorist groups.

Appropriate regulations, policies, procedures, organizational structures and resources are vital elements of effective ammunition management.

Turkey has developed its national capacity and diligently implements relevant norms, commitments and obligations in this regard. The safety and security conditions required for the effective management of ammunition in our country have been regulated in great detail and comply with the NATO guidelines for "the Storage of Military Ammunition and Explosives" and "the Storage, Maintenance and Transport of Ammunition on Deployed Missions or Operations."

Accordingly, controls regarding ammunition management are conducted through all stages of its lifecycle.

However, these efforts at the national level must be complemented at the regional and international levels as well. For this reason, Turkey strongly supports efforts to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of ammunition within all relevant fora.

The Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) is a critical framework and Turkey's commitment for the PoA's effective implementation remains steadfast.

To ensure the success of our efforts, more multilateral cooperation and international assistance for the requesting states which might have limited resources or capacity for effective management of ammunition are essential.

The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines are a vital asset in this regard.

Madame Chair,

Turkey recognizes the need for a more comprehensive approach to understanding and tackling the safety and security risks of ammunition. This should be at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels and build on and complement existing frameworks.

We support identifying a set of political commitments to be negotiated under the auspices of the General Assembly. This Open-ended Working Group, with its inclusive nature, represents the ideal forum for such discussion. With this understanding, we are looking forward to a productive first substantive session.

Thank you.