

**Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition  
New York, 13-17 February 2023**

**Statement of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms  
Tuesday, 14 February 2023**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms, or ‘CASA’ – a mechanism of 24 UN entities working together on issues related to small arms and light weapons control, ammunition management and the arms trade.

CASA partners commend Member States’ work on the elaboration of a set of political commitments for through-life conventional ammunition management. A new global framework on conventional ammunition would complement and reinforce the existing international regulatory framework on conventional arms control, including the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol. These instruments and their accompanying processes should be considered as complementary building blocks of the new global framework, and should be acknowledged.

CASA partners welcome the strong support expressed by Member States during the deliberations for a dedicated global framework on conventional ammunition and the comprehensive approach the Group has taken covering both

the security and safety of conventional ammunition throughout the life-cycle from the point of manufacture until disposal or use. We also welcome the flexible approach taken by the open-ended working group which allows for tailored implementation responding to diverse national and regional circumstances, specificities, needs or priorities.

The adoption and implementation of the proposed global framework would make a significant contribution to peace, security, the rule of law, human rights and development, tackling both the serious security and safety risks posed by inadequate ammunition management. Effective through-life management of ammunition is essential in preventing diversion of ammunition to illicit markets, including to non-State armed groups, terrorists and transnational criminal organizations. The widespread proliferation, availability and misuse of ammunition continues to play a central role in initiating, exacerbating and sustaining armed conflict, pervasive violence and crime; thus, hampering sustainable development. It facilitates violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and fuels insecurity and instability at community level. Diverted conventional ammunition are also being used for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices which continue to pose a serious threat to civilians, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers across regions. In addition to addressing these security concerns, the safe and secure management of ammunition promoted by the proposed future global framework also prevents and mitigate the impact of unplanned explosions at ammunition sites which can otherwise cause humanitarian disasters, including death, injury, destruction and displacement.

To address these risks effectively, CASA partners encourage the open-ended working group to elaborate and agree on concrete and forward leaning commitments covering all safety and security aspects of through-life ammunition

management in a holistic and comprehensive manner, including ammunition surveillance, the use of explosive limit licensing, the establishment of inventory and record keeping systems, the conduct of diversion risk assessments prior to ammunition transfers, the use of end-user certificates, disposal of surplus, cached, abandoned and unexploded conventional ammunition, marking and tracing of conventional ammunition, and diversion analysis and monitoring.

The United Nations further welcomes the inclusion of gender considerations in the deliberations of this Group and stresses the importance of gender mainstreaming conventional ammunition management policy and practice. The full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in the implementation and decision-making processes of through-life management of conventional ammunition needs to be strengthened. We also welcome the recognition that the gender dimensions of all stages of ammunition management require further consideration to inform gender-sensitive policies and programming. As highlighted by many States during the Group's deliberation, there is also a need to further assess and take into account the gender impacts of unplanned explosions and diversion of ammunition. Accordingly, CASA partners welcome Member States consideration of the growing body of research and guidance on the gender dimensions of ammunition management, the gendered impacts of accidental explosions and diversion, and women's experiences in ammunition management and urge States to address barriers to women's meaningful participation in policy and technical roles in this field.

The United Nations continues to promote the application by States of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) developed in 2011. The IATG contain practical, modular guidance to support States and other partners in safely and securely managing conventional ammunition stockpiles. States are encouraged to make use of the Guidelines for the development of national

standards and standing operating procedures related to conventional ammunition management. Under the umbrella of the UN SaferGuard Programme, our knowledge-management programme on ammunition management, the United Nations stands ready to further develop, improve and expand the IATG to cover all safety and security aspects of through-life conventional ammunition management. To support the application and accessibility of the IATG at the national and regional level, the UN has developed supporting guidance and tools, as well as their translation in multiple languages.

Tailored international cooperation and assistance will be crucial in ensuring the success and sustainability of efforts in implementing the set of political commitments. UN entities continue to offer policy and technical advice and assistance to promote safe and secure ammunition in line with international and regional instruments and the IATG. This also includes support to enhance legislative and regulatory frameworks at the regional and national level. The United Nations also supports States in conducting voluntary assessments to comprehensively analyse national institutions, policies, processes, capacities and responsibilities in ammunition management, the findings of which can inform options for enhancing ammunition management practices to be addressed through international cooperation and assistance. CASA partners have also been seeking complementarities among relevant existing UN initiatives including the UN SaferGuard Programme; the Global Firearms Programme and the project to support synergies among arms control, criminal justice and counter-terrorism; the initiative on weapons and ammunition management in the changing disarmament, demobilization and integration context; as well as funding mechanisms such as UNSCAR<sup>1</sup>, SALIENT<sup>2</sup> and the Western Balkans SALW Control Multi Partner

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<sup>1</sup> UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

<sup>2</sup> The Saving Lives Entity trust fund

Trust Fund<sup>3</sup>. The UN-wide readiness and commitment is ascertained in collectively and respectively supporting measures to implement the envisaged global framework, particularly through international cooperation and assistance, as well as relevant follow-up measures.

United Nations engagement has also focused on regional-level efforts, supporting regional cooperation, information-sharing and coordination in the control and management of arms, ammunition and explosives and the investigation of diversion incidences and of the illicit ammunition trade. We welcome the recognition of the contribution of regional and sub-regional organizations and of the need to build upon, complement and strengthen existing regional and sub-regional mechanisms, such as the regional roadmaps that have been developed in various regions including in the Western Balkans, the Caribbean and West Africa. We encourage States to develop and expand sub-regional and regional instruments and commitments based on the global political commitments, while also taking into account existent global legal instruments. This can help States to agree on regional challenges, priorities and measures, and support the monitoring of implementation at the regional level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CASA partners underline the need for multi-stakeholder engagement in the field of conventional ammunition. The role of civil society, academia, research institutions and industry cannot be over-emphasized, including in the area of technological developments, the elaboration of good practices from the field, and in the area of international cooperation and assistance. Fostering close cooperation with these stakeholders in the implementation and follow-up of the

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<sup>3</sup> [the Western Balkans SALW Control Multi Partner Trust Fund](#)

global framework will be key for enhanced through-life conventional ammunition management.

CASA partners encourage Member States to invest all efforts to reach agreement on a new global framework that comprehensively addresses the safety and security risks of conventional ammunition. The elaboration of the set of political commitments is just the first step. To make a difference, it needs to be followed-up with concrete action and implemented fully and in good faith.

The United Nations system remains your steadfast partner in all follow-up efforts related to implementation of the future global framework. This includes support and active participation in follow-up meetings and support to States to implement the political commitments at global, regional and national levels.

Thank you.

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