

Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition
Fourth Substantive Session (5 – 9 June 2023, New York)
Closing Statement by Chair
9 June 2023

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition has achieved a successful outcome by adopting its report without a vote. After more than three decades of on-and-off deliberations, the issue of ammunition management is an orphan no more. We have collectively found a home for conventional ammunition management under the roof of the United Nations.

This outcome would not have been possible had it not been for your collaborative and dedicated work throughout the last 18 months. I commend the flexibility, spirit of compromise and good will that delegations have shown throughout the four sessions of the work but in particular during the last week. I understand that this was a delicate and sensitive process for all States, but we have seen many delegations make every effort to narrow gaps and smooth over divisions. We owe our collective success to your skillful amalgamation of the art of diplomacy and substantive technical expertise.

This Global Framework marks the end of a long process which began almost three decades ago: from expert-level discussions on ammunition and explosives in the 1990s to discussions on small arms and light weapons ammunition in the framework of the UN Programme of Action to the 2008 Group of Governmental

Experts focused on the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles to the development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Most recently, the 2020/2021 Group of Governmental Experts created momentum among States to comprehensively address conventional ammunition from the point of manufacture until disposal or use. The observations and assessments made by the GGE laid the groundwork for this Group to successfully carry out its task.

Fast forward to the present day, when we mark this momentous occasion and collective step forward in solidifying through-life conventional ammunition management as an issue of standalone concern, which requires dedicated and sustained attention from the international community. This framework will help strengthen the safe and secure through-life management of conventional ammunition. It will fill gaps at the global level, while complementing and reinforcing relevant existing international instruments on conventional arms control.

We have long known that the dual risk of ammunition, as it relates to unplanned explosions and diversion, is a key driver of armed violence, conflict and instability. Ammunition is the fuel to the fire and, today, we are taking an important step to put out that fire. As you take the next few days to recover from the stress of the past week, I hope that you can find a quiet moment to reflect on the ramifications of what we have achieved collectively here today – on the human lives that you have saved, on the suffering you have spared future generations and on the concrete contribution that you have made to international peace and security.

Let me end by thanking the Vice Chair who so ably facilitated a lot of discussions; my entire team and I cannot but name all of them because they did an outstanding

job and without them I wouldn't have been able to perform my work. Let me start with Mr. Ivor Fung, Chief of the Conventional Arms Branch of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and Secretary of our Working Group. I want to thank also Ms. Nora Allgaier, Political Affairs Officer and Deputy Secretary, also of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. Ms. Alexandra Marksteiner, Associate Political Affairs Officer, also of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. Mr. Manuel Martinez Miralles of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research. Mr. James Bevan. Mr. Himayu Shiotani. Ms. Angela Hoyos. And finally, my colleague, Ms. Jane Viola Felber of the Conventional Arms Control Division of the German Federal Foreign Office. Without this remarkable team, this wouldn't have been possible and I am eternally grateful for their support.

Let me also express my thanks to the UN conference services and the interpreters for facilitating our deliberations. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank representatives of international and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society for their important contribution to our work throughout the four sessions. And finally, again, I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations for your constructive support and active engagement.

I have been remised in thanking one group of delegates, those that have adopted a facilitating role. If you allow, I would like to underline, in particular, the distinguished colleague from South Africa, who so ably has chaired the deliberations on Objective 8, not only in this session but also during the third session.

I think this is really a remarkable engagement from all delegations and I am really grateful to have been experienced this true type of cooperation. I think the spirit of

multilateralism is really living in these halls and I am very happy to have been witnessing that.

Thank you very much.