



Statement of Tech 4 Tracing

Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition Third Substantive Session 14 February 2023

Distinguished members of the Open-ended Working Group and representatives of regional and international organizations and civil society,

Tech 4 Tracing (T4T) is a partnership between new technology and arms control professionals whose objective is to incubate, test, and help deploy new technologies for enhanced arms and ammunition control in advancement of international agreements and in support of national authorities, law enforcement, human rights investigations and peacekeepers.

The progress that this Open-ended Working Group has made over the last year toward achieving its mandate to address gaps in through-life management of conventional ammunition held by States has been remarkable, and we applaud it. It is encouraging to see traceability addressed in the Draft Global Framework, especially in the dedicated Objective 11. In light of this, Tech 4 Tracing would like to offer a few reflections.

The marking of ammunition packaging is an important element not only in diversion prevention but also for identifying diversion that has already taken place. As such, we believe that the measures contained in Objective 11 for the marking of packaging for State-procured ammunition will improve the traceability of ammunition under national ownership. We hope that, over time, States adapt their procurement requirements to implement these package marking measures.

From the perspective of authorities tasked with identifying diverted ammunition that has ended up in crime or conflict, we note that ammunition packaging is not always available at scenes of violence, as criminals, insurgents, and other unauthorized users discard or destroy such documentation when they distribute and consume stolen and diverted ammunition.

In such cases, determining whether ammunition found at the scene of violence has been diverted from national authorities is difficult. Current documentation techniques mainly rely on visual inspection and manual recording of ammunition headstamp markings and other identifying features.

In the very near future, however, documentation can and will be automated using tools that incorporate computer vision, artificial intelligence and machine learning. As a result, the scope and scale of data on the distribution of illicit and diverted ammunition used in crime, conflict and other kinds of violence will soon increase greatly, and this information will be of enormous value to authorities tasked with identifying and responding to such violence.

For those of us who have been working in the arms control domain for 20 years or more, these are extremely exciting developments, and we believe that these tools and others like them will soon transform how arms and ammunition identification, documentation and tracing is conducted.

With this in mind, we urge this Group to retain within its scope consideration of new technologies to ammunition diversion prevention and identification, as currently noted in Objective 13. As the Group concludes its work and looks ahead to implementation mechanisms and processes, Tech 4 Tracing stands ready to provide updates on the readiness of tools that utilize these new technologies, including ones we are actively developing and testing today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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