



Cooperating to Disarm

STATEMENT

**DURING THE FOURTH SUBSTANSIVE SESSION OF THE OPEN ENDED
WORKING GROUP ON CONVECTIONAL AMMUNITION**

**8TH JUNE 2023
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

**BY
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Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor Mr. Chair

RECSA commends your leadership and commitment in ensuring the realization of the objectives of the Open Ended Working Group as set out by resolution 76/233.

Chairperson, Excellences, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is an indisputable fact that efforts to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunitions and their trafficking across borders must be undertaken within a comprehensive framework which recognises: the breadth and complexity of arms and ammunition proliferation and misuse; the wide range of measures that need to be combined to achieve effective controls; and the need to involve and secure the support of all stakeholders. We appreciate that the most effective approaches are those undertaken co-operatively among States.

I am glad to note that the Global Framework will provide a platform to effectively and efficiently address cross-border illicit trafficking of arms and ammunitions through coordinated approaches at sub-regional, regional and international levels. Unauthorized recipients, including organized criminal groups and terrorists, that operate across borders often share common sources of arms and ammunition, which makes sub-regional, regional and international information-sharing on arms and ammunitions diversion particularly useful.

In line with the African Union initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2030, RECSA in partnership with the African Union and with the support from UNODA has collected and destroyed surplus, obsolete and unserviceable weapons, ammunition and unexploded ordinances during the September Africa amnesty campaigns. This is in accordance to objective 10 of the global framework, denying unauthorized recipients including criminals and terrorists access.

RECSA has also been at the forefront in training selected Law Enforcement Agencies within the region on how to apply effective measures to manage and control weapons and ammunition, reducing the risk of diversion, theft and accidental/ unintentional explosions at ammunition sites in line with IATG. The beneficiaries of the trainings have been equipped with knowledge and skills based on internationally recognized standards. So far, 725 officers have been trained, 13 Senior Instructors and 27 National level instructors qualified after undergoing rigorous training programme. With the adoption of the Global Framework, RECSA will embark on training of the Law enforcement agencies on the best practices on ammunition management as stipulated in this document.

I applaud States for highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming in ammunition management policy and practice and the equal, full and meaningful

participation of women in through-life conventional ammunition management. Cognizant of this developments, In May 2023, RECSA adopted a Gender Policy which serves as a roadmap for RECSA to achieve its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and Goal 17 on partnerships for the goals. I am confident that the policy is a powerful tool for promoting gender responsive conventional ammunition management programming in the region.

Cognisant of the call for international cooperation and assistance by the global framework, RECSA's mandate provides the platform and capacity to enhance co-operation and co-ordination among its Member States. This facilitates commensurate national control systems, and assist in establishing conditions conducive for effective controls. Appreciating the unity of purpose and close cooperation in the RECSA region, actions at these levels serve to catalyse the realisation of global ambitions for actions on arms and ammunitions management.

Upon adoption of this global framework, RECSA commits to sensitize and lobby its Member States to effectively and efficiently implement the provisions of the global framework to adequately address safety and security risks associated with conventional ammunition.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that States share greater commonalities in terms of arms and ammunition challenges and solutions at regional and sub-regional levels. I draw your attention to the importance of regional mechanisms as the primary avenue for channeling assistance, due to the unique mandates and platforms for fostering information sharing and coordinating capabilities. I call upon the international community, where possible to offer technical expertise, equipment and financial assistance to realize the provisions of this global framework.

Ultimately, weapons and ammunition management can only be won through cooperation and purposeful allocation of resources to support safe, secure and sustainable through life management of conventional ammunition. As Nelson Mandela rightly put it, "Safety and Security don't just happen. They are the result of collective consensus and public investments."

Thank you Mr. Chair