STATEMENT
By the Representative of the OSCE’s Conflict Prevention Centre on the OSCE Activities to Contribute to the UN Programme of Action
at the 8th Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All its Aspects BMS8, 27 June - 1 July 2022, New York

To be delivered on 29 June 2022

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to provide BMS 8 with a short overview of the OSCE’s contributions to the implementation of the Programme of Action on SALW and the International Tracing Instrument.

The OSCE continues to work at the forefront of international efforts to contribute to the implementation of both the PoA and the ITI. It does so by strengthening comprehensive control of SALW throughout their life-cycle, as well as preventing diversion and misuse.

The fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and conventional ammunition is an integral part of the OSCE’s wider efforts to address the conflict cycle, including in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation. International cooperation and the availability of practical assistance are important catalysts for preventing and combatting diversion and the illicit transfer of SALW. Sharing good practices and lessons learned also contribute to effective national controls of SALW, including stockpile management.
The OSCE continues to support participating States in addressing a wide range of security and safety risks related to SALW and SCA such as:

- the presence of conventional ammunition, explosive material, detonating devices and highly toxic rocket fuel components;
- degraded physical infrastructure and poor stockpile and security management practices;
- the presence of explosive remnants of war and landmines; and
- trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives.

The OSCE uses a proven, transparent and well-functioning Assistance Mechanism for SALW and SCA, used by States to request assistance and pursue work on projects. Although the assistance mechanism has been used successfully since 2003, in 2021, a new initiative regarding the application of the Assistance Mechanism was launched aiming to improve the effectiveness and outcomes of SALW and SCA projects. Within the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation, our participating States are engaged in a wide-ranging dialogue on challenges to the provision of practical assistance, lessons learned from the perspective both donors and recipients, as well as areas for improving implementation of the assistance mechanism based on best practices.

During 2020 and 2021, the OSCE worked on 21 extra-budgetary assistance projects addressing concerns expressed by participating States including:

- **disposal of surpluses of SALW/SCA** [– for example, in Kyrgyzstan, 140 tons of mélange, a highly toxic rocket fuel component was removed and eliminated from the Novopavlovka area, near Bishkek];

- **improving SALW/SCA infrastructure** [– for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina improvement of safety and security of several storage sites has been ensured; in Moldova firefighting equipment was provided followed by the ongoing work on the firefighting infrastructure; in North Macedonia, the upgrading of 16 SALW armouries of the border police were successfully completed];

- **strengthening national ownership and capacities in relation to SALW/SCA** [– for example, in Moldova, a digital record-keeping system for ammunition was introduced; in Tajikistan, the Regional Explosive Hazards Training Centre was established and training courses on the disposal of explosive ordnance were held; and in Ukraine, support was provided for establishing the legislative framework and standards on
national mine action and for the transfer of knowledge and good practices on combating trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives].

Based on the OSCE’s Guidance note on Mainstreaming Gender into the OSCE Assistance Mechanism for SALW and SCA, six new assistance projects were launched in which gender was mainstreamed, contributing significantly to gender equality and/or women’s empowerment within their purview.

The total value of all current OSCE assistance projects amounts to 42.5 million euros, with over 37.1 million euros already received from 23 pS and two international organizations.

In its practical assistance work, the OSCE continues its collaboration with various international governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to ensure co-ordination and de-confliction of assistance efforts at the national and regional levels, including with the EU and its agencies and missions, the UN and its entities, NATO, the Small Arms Survey and other NGOs active in this field.

Mr. Chair,

The OSCE conducts regular reviews of the implementation of its framework documents through its biennial meetings on normative aspects and practical assistance projects. This process has proved valuable in identifying strengths and gaps in both our normative framework and practical assistance work, as well as facilitating cohesion and complementarity with the UN framework. These assessments have also helped participating States, often further supported by OSCE Field Missions, to take effective action addressing excessive accumulation and spread of SALW, and conventional ammunition, building on informed and agreed recommendations and international cooperation.

The OSCE continues its comprehensive review and update process to ensure that our well-regarded library of OSCE Best Practice Guides, covering, inter alia, each stage of the life-cycle of SALW, remain relevant and applicable. In the 2020-2021 timeframe, the OSCE pS reviewed, updated and adopted following BPGs:

- “Minimum standards for National Procedures for the Deactivation of SALW” [presenting examples of best practices aimed at ensuring that the deactivation of small arms and light weapons renders them permanently inoperable];
- “National Procedures for the Destruction of SALW” [providing general guidelines and procedures for the destruction of SALW from the time of identification for destruction until the final disposal of scrap material];

- “National Procedures for management, security and destruction of MANPADS” [providing guidance on weapons and ammunition management for MANPADS];

- “National procedures for stockpile management and security of SALW” [providing guidance for the effective management and security of national SALW stockpiles];

- “Procedures for Management of Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition” [providing recommended best practices that will facilitate and enhance proper management of national stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices].

Best Practice Guides also provide useful guidance for assistance projects and other capacity-building initiatives. On a voluntary basis, participating States continue to apply these agreed standards, incorporating them in national legislation and procedures. [OSCE Partners for Co-operation are also encouraged to follow these OSCE good practices.]

Mr. Chair,

Further details are available in my full statement that will be made available. In conclusion, through international cooperation, promulgation of good practices, and sharing of accumulated expertise, the OSCE will continue to contribute to the fight against illicit trafficking in SALW in furtherance of the PoA and ITI in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr Chair.