

**Opening remarks by the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional  
Ammunition**

**Monday, 23 May 2022  
Conference Room 2  
10.00am**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Ineffective conventional ammunition management is a growing concern for the international community. On the one hand, unplanned explosions of ammunition severely affect civilian populations, infrastructure, and the environment.

On the other hand — and much more damaging— ammunition diverted to unauthorised users, including criminal and terrorist groups, facilitates, fuels, and accelerates armed conflict and armed violence.

Because of the complementary nature of conventional arms and conventional ammunition, it is obvious to me that national, regional, and international efforts to establish effective control over conventional *arms* will yield full results only when such controls are also extended to *ammunition*.

Critical gaps, however, remain.

As we collectively move into this OEWG process, and as we reflect *inter alia* on the findings of the 2020-21 Group of Governmental Experts report, it is important to stress that this is only the latest stage in a process at international level that began in the mid-2000s.

Starting with the 2008 GGE on conventional ammunition in surplus, we have seen growing international attention to the problems associated with conventional ammunition.

By conventional ammunition, we mean not just ammunition for small arms and light weapons but also far larger munitions, such as for artillery systems.

These larger munitions, when ineffectively managed, pose much more of an explosive threat to national infrastructure and civilian populations than small-calibre ammunition. But also, their risk of diversion should not be underestimated, even it was only as a source for explosive material.

The 2008 GGE led to the development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and to the establishment of the UN SaferGuard Programme. These measures represent substantial steps taken to better manage the safety risks posed to States and societies by ineffectively managed ammunition stockpiles.

They also provide important guidance for securing national ammunition stockpiles from diversion.

But it has become increasingly clear that ammunition is also subject to diversion *throughout* its life, from the time of its production to the time of its eventual use or disposal.

As recent crises demonstrate, ineffectively secured ammunition is in high demand among criminal and terrorist groups—and in the latter case, particularly for the purposes of manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IED).

I do not want to speak in detail regarding the report of the 2020-21 GGE, because many of you will have read the report and drawn your own conclusions.

From this perspective, I see the 2020-21 GGE as having identified **some** *key ingredients for international action on ammunition*, rather than defining any fixed recipe for action.

That is the task of the Open-Ended Working Group.

The OEWG has been mandated by the General Assembly with the important task of addressing existing gaps in through-life management of conventional ammunition and elaborating a set of political commitments as a new global framework.

Importantly, the GGE Report, and the Resolution which mandates the OEWG, speak of “a *comprehensive* framework” to support safe, secure, and sustainable ammunition management at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels.

The word “comprehensive” here, suggests that such a framework should address at all geographical levels the *through-life* management of ammunition—not just to tackle safety issues, but also to address ammunition diversion along the *full* supply chain.

I would like to thank you all for your constructive inputs and your flexibility in enabling this process so far.

I am confident that our goal of more effectively managing conventional ammunition at every level will result in a win-win situation for all parties concerned.

I thank you.