



United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition
Second Substantive Session, 15 – 19 August 2022

Agenda item 5f: Elaboration of a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management, including international cooperation and assistance

Exchange among Member States on set F of guiding questions

Geneva 18 August 2022
Statement by Switzerland

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, we would like to thank the many delegations who commented on the working paper of the informal dialogue convened by Brazil, Ghana, Singapore, Jamaica and Switzerland. We would like to encourage delegations who have not done so to have a look at this working paper as a potential basis for reflections. We would be interested to hear the views of delegations about the proposals that emerged during these discussions, and what needs further deepening. We stand ready to co-convene a second informal dialogue between this formal session and the next one to continue the discussion.

Mr. Chair,

Please allow me to share some preliminary remarks on international cooperation and assistance. One of the main conclusions of the Geneva informal dialogue was that “*international cooperation and assistance needs to be as global as necessary, and as regional or sub-regional as possible, in support of national implementation.*” This week, we have heard many voices also going in that direction. The primary effort should indeed be at the regional level. Because countries in a given region share similar dynamics and challenges, and because it is also easier to provide assistance when the distance is shorter.

In some regions, there are existing international cooperation and assistance mechanisms, and such mechanisms should be further strengthened. However, for regions where there is not such a mechanism, a global process to seek assistance is vital. Or how the delegate of India termed it: “a global 911” would be important. This would not only be useful for regions without an international cooperation and assistance mechanism, but also for contributing States such as Switzerland who need a global umbrella or mechanism within the UN to provide assistance outside of their regions.

On the basis of the recommendations of the first Geneva informal dialogue, we believe that it would be useful to reflect how the political commitments could support the creation of an agile international cooperation and assistance umbrella mechanism within the UN. As Switzerland, we could imagine a

light mechanism which could build on and strengthen what already exists at the global level. It could promote complementarity and coherence at different levels and provide support to existing mechanisms.

In the informal dialogue, many participants also underlined the utility to have a global clearinghouse to receive and assess needs, match these needs with resources and expertise, and facilitate exchanges of lessons learnt. This clearinghouse could also be under the umbrella of the UN.

During the first Geneva informal dialogue, we noted limited awareness on available international cooperation and assistance mechanisms. Many participants to the dialogue highlighted that they do not know how and where they can submit assistance requests, and what type of assistance can be provided. There is also a lack of awareness and information on how the different mechanisms fit together. If we were to use relevant international cooperation and assistance mechanisms efficiently, this would require a sound understanding of possibilities and limitations of each of them. In this regard, the complementarities between existing international cooperation and assistance mechanisms could be mapped. This mapping would increase understanding among policy-makers and practitioners. At the same time, it could inform the operationalisation of a potential global UN umbrella.

Mr. Chair,

Please allow me also to share some preliminary remarks on possible avenues for follow-up and review. The first avenue relates to the IATG. Various delegations expressed the need to fill potential gaps in guidance on security aspects in through-life ammunition management. Many delegations, including mine, proposed that such undertaking could most efficiently take place within the framework of the UN SaferGuard and the IATG Review Board, as a State-led process. We think that strengthening and complementing the IATG with regard to certain security aspects could typically be a concrete follow-up.

My second reflection relates to periodic meetings of States and information sharing. Once more, we believe it may be early in the process to have an in-depth discussion about potential follow-up meetings. But please allow me to share some preliminary thoughts. First, through discussions with delegations, we heard that there is not an immense appetite for the creation of a follow-up mechanism akin to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA), in which States gather every two years to negotiate an outcome document. My delegation shares the view that such a mechanism is not necessarily needed to follow up on this process.

However, we could see benefit in States gathering with a certain regularity. Such meetings, rather than negotiating an outcome document as is the case in the PoA, could have as main objective to share information, and further strengthen implementation. In this sense, the focus of such potential, periodic meetings could be to bring stakeholders together to exchange on good practices and lessons learnt in implementing the political commitments, and on implementation challenges they face. As previously mentioned, much of international cooperation and assistance takes place at the regional and sub-regional level. A lot of exchange on good practice and lessons learnt should also take place at the local level. However, we could see benefit of cross-regional exchange at the global level at certain intervals of time, but with an operational approach. Such an operational focus could be of added value and bring us forward as a community of practice.

I thank you.