United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition  
First Substantive Session, 23 – 27 May 2022  

Agenda item 5c: Existing global, regional and sub-regional processes  
Existing international, regional and sub-regional frameworks applicable to conventional ammunition  

New York, 25 May 2022  
Statement by Switzerland  

Mr. Chair,  

My delegation is very pleased to see you in New York. Please allow me to express our sincere appreciation for how you have led this group over the past months. We are convinced that under your able leadership, the OEWG will be able to reach a successful outcome.  

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation for the precious contributions by international, regional and non-governmental organisations this morning. Switzerland believes that they play an important role in safe and secure ammunition management, complementing and supporting States, for instance in international cooperation and assistance. Their insights have greatly enriched our deliberations.  

Mr. Chair,  

Inadequate ammunition management fuels conflict and armed violence. Despite this, there has been no dedicated global framework to consider the safe and secure management of ammunition comprehensively. Rather, a patchwork of frameworks at the international, regional and sub-regional level currently addresses ammunition management in a fragmented manner. Switzerland believes that it is essential for the open-ended working group to seek coherence and consistency with existing frameworks applicable to ammunition management without duplicating them.  

At the global level, Switzerland underlines the particular relevance of the following instruments:  

- The Arms Trade Treaty,  
- The Protocol V on explosive remnants of war of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons,  

Beyond these often cited instruments, we believe that other global instruments also apply to the through-life of ammunition management. For example, for the recovery stage it is worth underlying the relevance of clearance obligations of certain ammunition types under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions or the relevant protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.
Regional instruments should also be taken into consideration by the OEWG. For example, the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is of particular relevance. This document aims at improving stockpile management, specifically regarding surplus assessment, as well as international cooperation and assistance. Since adopting this document in 2003, OSCE participating States have developed considerable good practices on effective ammunition management upon which the open-ended working group should draw.

Mr. Chair,

In Switzerland’s view, ammunition management brings an essential contribution to conflict prevention, sustaining peace and sustainable development. Frameworks and processes not directly related to arms control are therefore also relevant, and should be taken into account by the OEWG. Let me highlight four of them:

First and most notably, ammunition management supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ammunition management is crucial to curb illicit arms flows and reduce violence, but also to increase urban safety and strengthen national institutions. It therefore directly contributes to sustainable development.

Secondly, the Women, Peace and Security agenda is another framework relevant to ammunition management. Unplanned explosions at munitions sites and the diversion of ammunition have gendered impacts. At the same time, ammunition management policy and practice benefits from the involvement of both men and women. Switzerland has supported research by UNODA and Small Arms Survey into the topic as well as the mainstreaming of gender considerations into the latest revision of the IATG. The OEWG should look into the gendered impacts of as well as into the participation of women in ammunition management.

Thirdly, Switzerland underlines the relevance of integrating ammunition management, where appropriate, into the mandates of United Nations peace operations and special political missions. Such an approach contributes to supporting ammunition management capacities in host nations.

Finally, Switzerland believes that the open-ended working group should also take into account the Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda as an important call to action, specifically action 22 on securing excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles. Switzerland serves as a champion of this specific action. Under this umbrella, we have supported the establishment of the Ammunition Management Advisory Team in Geneva. The latter supports requesting States to improve the safety and security of stockpiles, fosters dissemination of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, and promotes effective and sustainable international cooperation and assistance.

I thank you.