Mr. Chair,

In Switzerland's experience, States with greatest ammunition management challenges are often those that are least equipped to identify and address them. This underlines the significant need for international cooperation and assistance. Matching needs, resources, and expertise effectively will be instrumental for the success of the political commitments. Certain assistance frameworks relevant to ammunition management exist, which all have their own strengths and limitations.

For Switzerland, any potential international cooperation and assistance mechanism in support of the political commitments should entail structured processes through which States can request, receive and provide assistance. To be adequate, effective and efficient, such a mechanism should strive for sustainability so that States can build their national capacity to continuously perform at the desired level without external support. It should foster a comprehensive and holistic approach so that capacity-building initiatives address through-life management of ammunition and include all relevant stakeholders. Finally, it should build upon and promote national ownership.

In Switzerland's view, it is important to build on good practices and lessons learnt from existing assistance frameworks at the global, regional and sub-regional level. In support of such reflections, Switzerland will co-convene an informal dialogue series on international cooperation and assistance, together with a group of co-convening States.

This informal series intends to generate ideas on how international cooperation and assistance in through-life ammunition management could be further strengthened. In particular, it aims at identifying key modalities for any potential mechanism to support the implementation of the political commitments. To that effect, it seeks to bring together the experiences, views and needs of States, UN, international and regional partners as well as NGOs in order to generate ideas and distill key inputs for consideration by the OEWG. The first dialogue will take place in late June. An invitation will be sent in the coming days.

Mr. Chair,
In relation to guidelines, Switzerland stresses the particular importance of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). Since their establishment in 2011, they have become the technical reference in ammunition management at the international level. Their periodic reviews have further strengthened their adequacy and effectiveness.

Switzerland is of the view that implementing the IATG is a key measure to improve safety and security of ammunition stockpiles. We believe that further efforts are paramount to enhance the dissemination of and training on the IATG at the national level, including by means of technical assistance programmes. Particular efforts are needed to use the IATG for supporting States to develop and strengthen their organisational capabilities. Such capabilities entail processes, organisational structures and capability enabling lines and form the basis for sustainability in ammunition management. Switzerland believes that the political commitments can contribute significantly to sensitising States on the IATG.

Switzerland concurs with the conclusions of the GGE that it is essential to assess carefully what already exists, when addressing gaps in guidance on through-life security measures. Much guidance is already available on issues such as pre-transfer risk assessment or stockpile management. When filling potential gaps, Switzerland believes that it could be most efficient and coherent to avoid parallel global standards in ammunition management. While the IATG currently focus primarily on safety aspects of ammunition management and the security of stockpiles, they are a living document which allows further thematic aspects to be added. In general, the development of additional guidance should be undertaken as a continued cooperation between States and civil society experts, under the umbrella of the UN SaferGuard programme. This provides the necessary legitimacy for effective uptake, as witnessed in the development of the IATG.

I thank you.