

BICC Statement to the OEWG 2023

Mr. Chair, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I represent the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC) and in particular the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control project, which is generously funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Over the past decade, we have dedicated our work to supporting processes which enhance ammunition management. Throughout our work, we have prioritised supporting the implementation of national, regional, and international frameworks concerning Weapons and Ammunition Management. However, there is a crucial gap in the global arms control architecture that remains unaddressed, and which this process is designed to fill – the coverage of conventional ammunition.

To tackle this gap, BICC recognises the key roles played by national, sub/regional and regional organisations and acknowledges that their involvement is crucial for the successful implementation of the global framework being discussed in this forum. Thus, BICC remains committed to continue partnering with national, regional, and cross-continental bodies, such as the African Union Commission, as well as regional bodies like the ECOWAS Commission and the Regional Centre for Small Arms Control (RECSA) and at the national level with National Focal Points and Commissions such as our colleagues at the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms. Together, we aim to promote regional and cross-continental engagement in establishing and implementing a global comprehensive framework to support safe, secure and sustainable through-life ammunition management. Given the ongoing insecurity caused by SALW and all types of conventional ammunition, including illicit cross-border trafficking and uneven stockpile security, it is imperative that any consolidated global principles encompass ammunition for small arms and light weapons. We urge that this inclusion will be reflected in the final text which must encompass all types of conventional ammunition.

On the operational level, BICC has been actively involved in addressing safety and security aspects as well as utilising and promoting international standards through supporting the development of regional Train the Trainers programmes in Physical Security and Stockpile Management. Our collaboration with the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition (MSAG) group, specifically the German Bundeswehr Verification Centre the Austrian Ministry of Defence, and our partners RECSA and ECOWAS has yielded a pool of experts in the Horn of Africa and ECOWAS regions. These PSSM experts possess the necessary skills to enhance ammunition management processes, even in limited-resource and insecure environments and could be requested via RECSA and ECOWAS to support the implementation of a global framework for through-life ammunition management. The development of these resources demonstrate the effective partnerships that can be forged between regional bodies, national agencies and civil society organisations.

By facilitating information exchange, providing advisory services, and conducting technical capacity-building activities, we aim to align our current and future work programmes with

the implementation of the politically binding instrument that will emerge from this process. We will continue to support the development of tools and resources to promote better ammunition management practices and focus on the areas of marking and tracing as well as analysis on diverted ammunition through our Small Arms and Ammunition Field Identification Training (SAAFIT) programme developed with the Bundeswehr Verification Centre.

We recognise the importance of sharing experiences and lessons learned to bridge existing gaps in through-life management, international cooperation, and assistance. In this endeavour, we emphasize the need for a needs-driven and sustainable approach to international cooperation and assistance and will thus continue to support processes that develop operational technical capabilities, stimulate high level engagement, and promote pragmatic, holistic stakeholder involvement. Of particular importance in this regard is working to strengthen gender mainstreaming across our WAM processes and promoting the meaningful participation of women in through-life conventional ammunition management.

In conclusion, BICC stands ready to contribute to the establishment and implementation of a comprehensive global framework for through-life ammunition management and would urge all delegates to ensure that the final document is as comprehensive as possible.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.