PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT ON GENERIC PREVENTIVE MEASURES

SPEAKING NOTES

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

In my capacity as Coordinator it is my pleasure and honor to present to you the results of the 2013 meeting of experts’ session on Generic Preventive Measures. A full report is contained in documents CCW/P.V/CONF/2013/5 and CCW/P.V/CONF/2013/5/Cor.1. The corrigendum has been released in order to better reflect what the US delegation has actually stated during the meeting.

 Explosive remnants of war (ERW) are not only the result of munitions failing to explode as designed when employed during an armed conflict, they are too often the result of accidents or mishandling of explosive ordnance during the phases of production, packaging, storage and transportation. For this reason, Article 9 of Protocol V encourages High Contracting Parties “to take generic preventive measures (GPMs) aimed at minimizing the occurrence of explosive remnants of war, including, but not limited to, those referred to in part 3 of the technical annex.”

 The Sixth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V decided that the Meeting of Experts in 2013 should consider what further contribution Protocol V could provide to the safe and secure storage of ammunition in peace time and continue the practice of addressing one specific technical issue directly related to the implementation of Article 9 and Part 3 of the Technical Annex of Protocol V. In addition, High Contracting Parties were invited to indicate how the guide adopted by the Fourth Conference has contributed to the implementation of Part 3 of the Technical Annex.

 As for the technical issue, open ended consultations conducted on the margin of the Conference indicated that, although considerable work has been carried out in this area, the safe and secure storage of ammunition continues to be an ongoing challenge for States and worth of further discussions in the framework of Protocol V.

 Actually, the safe handling of ammunition stockpiles is a concern not only for individual governments but for the entire international community as well. In this context, in 2008 the report of a group of governmental experts mandated by Resolution 61/72 was welcomed by the UN General Assembly which strongly encouraged States to implement its recommendations. The report contained also a recommendation for technical guidelines for the stockpile management of ammunition to be developed within the United Nations. This recommendation triggered a process that eventually led to the compilation of what are now commonly known as International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, in short IATGs, the
completion of which and the establishment of the “SaferGuard” was welcomed in 2012 by the General Assembly in its Resolution A/RES/66/42. The IATGs are now in the second phase of implementation. Several tools have been developed to assist this work and focus mostly on training courses for military and law enforcement officials. One Organization deeply involved in the development and implementation of IATGs is UNMAS, which has been drawing lessons learnt from the work conducted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Libya, Seychelles and Somalia.

The discussions on the safety of ammunition storage where opened by presentations made by representatives of the Small Arms Survey, NATO, the Mine Advisory Group and the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Illustrating the problems in this area was the findings of the Small Arms Survey from its work on unplanned explosions at munitions sites (in short UEMS). There had been more than a two-fold increase in the number of accidents between the periods 1987 – 1996 to 1997 – 2006 while the average rate of casualties has tripled. An update on this problem will be provided shortly by Ms. Pilar Reina from the Small Arms Survey.

The Maintenance Supply Agency of the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO) illustrated three incidents which emphasized different aspects of stockpile management. This presentation showed the large variety of problems a country has to take into account in designing and managing an ammunition storage facility but it also demonstrated the engagement of the international community in tackling this issue.

The Mine Advisory Group (MAG) presented the approach of that organization to Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM), which includes the assessment of the vulnerability and of the probability of the occurrence of a threat, the definition of the level of risk and the potential impact of the hazard on the surrounding population and the elaboration of a strategy.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) presented the “Ammunition Safety Management Toolkit”, aimed at protecting vulnerable communities from explosive hazards using low-cost and low-technology methods. Recognizing that the first level of the IATGs is a high standard to reach, the toolkit breaks down this first level into easily attainable steps.

Before getting underway with the report on the contributions provided by States Parties, namely Albania, Spain and the United States of America, I would like to pass the floor to Ms. Pilar Reina, from the Small Arms Survey, for the presentation of

Pilar, you have the floor.
Thank you Pilar. Now the floor is open for questions and comments on the presentation given by Madame Reina on behalf of the Small Arms Survey. To whom can I give the floor?

Thank you to everyone for his or her interventions.

Now I will report on the interventions by States parties.

Albania faced a number of challenges concerning the storage of ammunition and is committed to preventing future explosions. In response to these problems, Albania is working on evaluating and disposing of all surplus ammunition stock by the end of 2013. NATO and other international standards had been implemented into national laws.

In past years, discussions focused on safe storage in military facilities. An equally important matter is the safe storage in civilian facilities, which include production factories or demilitarization plants. Spain and the United States of America touched upon this subject.

Spain spoke on the regulation of its civilian companies. Companies managing explosives have to submit detailed plans to the ministries of industry, interior and defense and are required to implement specific security measures. In manufacturing centers the Ministry of Defense provides guidance on quality assurance and certifies that buildings are suitable for manufacturing and storing explosives and explosive devices. In all of this work, Spain is guided by the IATGs, international health and safety management system 18001, relevant NATO tools and UN Safeguards.

For those countries with inadequate munitions stockpile programs, the United States regards the IATGs as a “how to” manual for establishing a strong programme. The United States has in place munitions safety programs that comply with the intent of the IATGs, but exceed this framework’s requirements as its programs apply to all aspects of the lifecycle of munitions and not only storage. The United States’ Department of Defense implements a stockpiled conventional munitions assistance program to provide training and support to allies and partners in the disposal, demilitarization, physical security and stockpile management of potentially dangerous stockpiles of explosive ordnance. At national level, for non-Department of Defense commercial explosive operations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and
Explosives (ATFE) is responsible for implementing U.S. regulations regarding Commerce in Explosive. Persons engaging in such commerce must have a federal license.

(a) The meeting confirmed that the problem of unplanned explosions at munitions sites (UEMS) is of increasing concern and donor States, international and regional organizations and NGOs are actively engaged in providing assistance on the safe and secure storage of ammunition.

(b) It is widely recognised that one of the major challenges for the safe storage of ammunition is that countries continue to keep large stockpiles when this simply is not required. The main remedy is to dispose of ammunition, especially ageing ammunition. The other challenges identified are: the amount of ammunition being stored exceeding the capacity of the depot; inadequate resources; decaying infrastructure; ineffective inspection systems; poor handling of ammunition, repairs, maintenance and disposal systems; a lack of trained staff; and ineffective national legislation. There is no international legally binding protocol to address the safe and secure storage of ammunition stockpiles although several guidelines elaborated by some international organisations and specialised agencies and NGOs exist.

(c) The best reference for safety arrangements are the IATGs. They are designed to assist States to establish national standards and national standing operating procedures (SOPs) by establishing a frame of reference, which can be used, or adapted for use, as a national standard. However their implementation is a challenging and expensive effort. Tools aimed at facilitating the implementation of the IATGs using low-cost and low-technology methods have been developed and are available for facilitating the attainment of IATGs standards.

Those are the main outputs of the meeting. At this point I would like to draw your attention on the fact that, for the fourth year in a row, the meeting of experts was focused on the safe management of ammunition storage facilities. Without any doubt this is an important issue, but it is very marginal if we consider the broad set of possible generic preventive measures. In spite of this, in my consultation for the definition of the issue to be discussed, States parties showed that they were not prepared or willing to discuss other topics relevant to GPMs such as, for instance, the ammunition manufacturing process.

I wonder if:
- it is possible, now, to identify a new item to be discussed next year,
- or
- if it is worth to keep the safe management of ammunition storage facilities in the agenda of the 2014 Meeting of Experts,
or
if it is advisable to suspend the session at the level of experts on Generic Preventive Measures until there is the need to gather on a specific issue.
You can now see on the screen a synopsis of the generic preventive measures listed in the Technical Annex. The floor is open for suggestions and advice.

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C. Recommendations

The Seventh Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V may wish to take the following decisions:

(a) To encourage High Contracting Parties to carry out measures to ensure the safe storage of their munitions and in particular to pay special attention to the quantity of munitions being stored, aging munitions, the adequacy of the infrastructure of the storage facilities and ongoing management of storage munitions sites;

(b) To encourage the High Contracting Parties to implement the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and Part 3 of the Technical Annex to Protocol V and report on such work in their Protocol V national annual reports;

(c) To evaluate whether there is still the need to continue consultations on Generic Preventive Measures in a different format other than the one established in accordance with article 10 paragraph 1 of the Protocol. After the debate we just had, my proposal is to (focus next year’s discussions on ..........) (keep the topic of the safe management of ammunition storage facilities in the agenda of the 2014 Meeting of Experts) (suspend the session at the level of experts on Generic Preventive Measures until there is the need to gather on a specific issue);

(d) To hold a practical workshop on the management of munitions sites during the 2014 consultations, i.e. the (Meeting of Experts) (annual Conference); and

(e) To task the CCW Implementation Support Unit to follow-up on key issues with High Contracting Parties that have not yet reported on their implementation of generic preventive measures.

Having said that, I now open the floor for final comments or questions.

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Thank you to everyone for his or her interventions.

This meeting stands adjourned.

I hand back to the President

Cooperative Assistance

Amendee Statement