Mr Coordinator,

Firstly, I'd like to express MAG's appreciation for your work this year and for the continued focus on safe and secure storage of ammunition in this meeting. As you know, this issue is particularly important for MAG, given our work to assist States in preventing diversion from ammunition stocks. We have seen again this year how the diversion of ammunition to the illicit market can have an enormous detrimental effect on men, women and children as well as a destabilising effect at the national and regional levels.

As has been discussed here for several years now, technical assistance to states with arms management and destruction can significantly reduce the risk and impact of unplanned explosions at munitions sites and the devastating human, social, economic and environmental consequences that these invariably have.

We feel there is growing acknowledgment that taking steps where it is needed to improve good practice in ammunition management is responsible as well as possible and that States should do it. Many are indeed seeking and receiving expert professional assistance. This is an extremely positive step and we hope it will continue.

From an operational perspective, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (or IATG) are already adding value. Technical interventions do not have to be costly or high-tech to reduce the risk of diversion and unplanned explosive event. Even in cases where capacity and infrastructure is most challenging and the minimum provisions of the IATG cannot be reached, steps can still be taken towards achieving the IATG's incremental goals. These can have a large and immediate positive effect.

I am proud to be able to say that MAG and other NGOs, working closely with each other as well as the United Nations and donor community, are increasingly recognised as providers of expert technical assistance to States. There is increasing demand for our support and we are doing everything we can to respond. We continue to encourage States to seek technical assistance from the full range of experts, including NGOs.
Finally, I would like to thank the donors on whom this support depends - but also call for greater financial assistance from the international community to meet demand.

Ultimately, surplus, obsolete and poorly stored ammunition will go away on their own. But by the diversion and devastating unplanned explosions that none of us want to see.

Thank You.

END