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English only

**Preparatory Committee for the United Nations
Conference to Review Progress Made in the
Implementation of the Programme of Action to
Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in
Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 9-20 January 2006**

Food for thought for possible

**Draft elements on ammunition for a Final Document of the UN SALW Programme
of Action Review Conference 2006**

(Submitted by France and Germany)

I. Background:

The combat against the illicit trade in ammunition is a pressing task. Hundreds of millions of small arms and light weapons are in circulation, a great part of them in zones of instability. For military combat, ammunition is needed in large quantities. The intensity of conflicts can be diminished significantly by interrupting the influx of ammunition and by drying up the stream of its illegal delivery.

Surplus ammunition can be diverted from military stockpiles into zones of instability where it fuels conflicts. It can also get into the hands of criminal gangs or terrorists. Ill-managed ammunition stockpiles threaten the population as they can damage the environment and pose the risk of explosion.

The Group of Experts which was appointed pursuant to the resolution „Small Arms“ of December 1997 (52/38 J) submitted a report in June 1999 (A/54/155) on the problems of ammunition and explosives in all their aspects. The aim of the report was to assess whether and how enhanced controls of ammunition and explosives can contribute to preventing and reducing the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and proliferation, as well as the abuse, of small arms and light weapons. The report constitutes an excellent basis for further work to promote the control of ammunition in the framework of the United Nations.

The report submitted by the chairman of the OEWG on marking and tracing of SALW 2005 which was endorsed by consensus contains a recommendation to address the issue of SALW ammunition in a comprehensive manner as part of a separate process conducted within the framework of the UN. In 2005 the UN General Assembly for the first time adopted a resolution exclusively dedicated to the problems of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus and the illicit trafficking of ammunition.

At regional and subregional level, much work has been dedicated to the issue of illicit ammunition. The ammunition problem, however, has, up to now, often not met with due consideration of the international community. While international efforts to control small arms and light weapons have increased over the last years, still not enough attention is paid to ammunition.

The most urgent necessity is to ensure the security and safety of stockpiles of ammunition. Stockpile security aims at preventing losses of ammunition, stockpile safety aims at protecting ammunition and the stockpiles themselves against physical dangers.

Participating States might express their intention to search, as part of a follow-up to the Conference, for ways and means to tackle the issue of stockpiles of ammunition and to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons ammunition.

II. The following elements could be included in the Final Document of the Review Conference:

Participating States are mindful of the fact that the consequences of illicit trafficking in ammunition can be just as devastating as the consequences of illicit trafficking in weapons;

Participating States recognize that appropriate controls with regard to the security and safety of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons ammunition are indispensable in order to reduce the risks of explosion, environmental hazard and diversion;

Participating States underline the necessity to assess, on a national basis in conformity with a State's legitimate security needs, whether parts of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons ammunition should be considered to be in surplus;

Participating States encourage States capable of so doing to assist other States bilaterally or through international or regional organizations, on a voluntary and transparent basis, in elaborating and implementing programmes to eliminate surplus ammunition stockpiles or to improve their stockpile management;

Participating States decide to consider, as part of a follow-up to the Conference, further steps to tackle the issue of stockpiles of ammunition and to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons ammunition.
