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# Background paper:

The Global Framework for  
Through-life Conventional  
Ammunition Management  
and its Application in  
Latin America and  
the Caribbean





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The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management and its Application in Latin America and the Caribbean.

• Introduction	<b>02</b>
• Brief history on the establishment of the framework	<b>03</b>
• Main provisions	<b>06</b>
• Synergies with other instruments on conventional arms control	<b>11</b>
• Opportunities and potential challenges for implementation of the Global Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean	<b>15</b>
• Recommendations for Latin America and the Caribbean	<b>18</b>

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# Introduction

The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management<sup>1</sup> (“Global Framework”) is a new political arms control instrument that aims to fill a gap at the international level by creating a dedicated regulatory instrument on conventional ammunition. It contains 15 objectives aiming to reduce the safety and security risks related to conventional ammunition at every stage of the ammunition life-cycle from production through pre-transfer, transfer, relocation and transport, stockpiling and recovery, to their eventual use or disposal. The objectives contain individual measures to promote the safety, security and sustainability of through-life conventional ammunition management. The Global Framework also underscores the importance of international cooperation and assistance and lays out a dedicated follow-up and review process for its effective implementation.

The Global Framework seeks to address two main challenges. The first challenge the Global Framework addresses, is the range of risks posed by the diversion and illicit trafficking of conventional ammunition of all types and calibres to unauthorized recipients. This includes criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists, and their trafficking into illicit markets, including their subsequent use in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices. As the Global Framework notes, diversion and trafficking into illicit markets also contribute to the intensity and duration of armed conflict, armed violence, including gender-based armed violence. Diversion and illicit trafficking also pose threats to peace, security, stability, and sustainable development at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.

The second concern that the Global Framework addresses is the devastation caused by unplanned explosions of conventional ammunition at ammunition sites.<sup>2</sup> These explosions claim thousands of lives, disrupt communities’ livelihoods, and can generate severe humanitarian, human rights, socioeconomic, environmental and public health impacts. The Global Framework seeks to both prevent unplanned explosions from happening and mitigate the impacts if such events do happen.

This working paper provides an overview of the Global Framework. After setting out a brief history of the process of its elaboration and adoption, the main objectives of the Global Framework are discussed. The 15 objectives are briefly summarised with reference to the rationale for each objective as set out in the Annex of the Global Framework. Synergies with other international and regional arms control instruments are examined. The paper then looks at some of the main opportunities and potential challenges for countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region and provides recommendations to support the implementation of the Global Framework in this region.

<sup>1</sup> A/78/111, 16 June 2023

<sup>2</sup> Research conducted by the Small Arms Survey reveals that unplanned explosions at munition sites are widespread and increasingly common: in its database, the Survey has recorded more than 642 incidents between 1979 and December 2021. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/unplanned-explosions-munitions-sites-uems>.

# Brief history on the establishment of the framework

The establishment of the Global Framework is the result of a multi-decade journey through the United Nation's (UN) General Assembly. The General Assembly's first consideration of the issue of ammunition was in the context of small arms and light weapons in the 1990s. The Secretary-General prepared a report with the assistance of a Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms in 1997<sup>3</sup> in which the Panel concluded that ammunition and explosives formed an integral part of the small arms and light weapons used in conflicts and that the availability of ammunition was an important independent element. Following the recommendation of the Panel, the Secretary-General prepared a comprehensive study on all aspects of the problems related to ammunition and explosives with the assistance of a Group of Experts in 1999.<sup>4</sup> The Group of Experts concluded that measures to control small arms and light weapons would not be complete if they did not include measures to control ammunition and explosives. The report is comprehensive, addressing the full range of ammunition management and controls.

During the negotiations of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), adopted in 2001, States discussed the inclusion of ammunition in the instrument. The deliberations did not garner consensus, resulting in a final document which left this issue deliberately ambiguous with a reference to "...in All Its Aspects".<sup>5</sup> In the later meetings of the PoA, some States, especially those from Latin America and the Caribbean, viewed this reference to include small arms ammunition.

In 2005, the report of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons recommended that the issue of small arms and light weapons ammunition be addressed in a comprehensive manner as part of a separate process conducted within the framework of the UN.<sup>6</sup>

Separate from the PoA process, in 2005 the General Assembly decided to include the issue of "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" in the agenda of its sixty-first session of deliberations.<sup>7</sup> This paved the way for more comprehensive and constructive discussions on conventional ammunition under the General Assembly auspice. Subsequent resolutions were adopted on annual and then biennial basis. In the framework of this resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts, to consider further steps to enhance cooperation on the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.<sup>8</sup> This marked the most significant development related to ammunition since the studies and reports of the late 1990s.

## 90s



<sup>3</sup> "General and Complete Disarmament", A/52/298

<sup>4</sup> The "Report of the Group of Experts on the problem of ammunition and explosives" was released in 1999 in UN document A/54/155.

<sup>5</sup> A/CONF.192/15, 20 July 2001

<sup>6</sup> Resolution A/60/88 and A/60/88/Corr. 2

<sup>7</sup> Resolution A/60/74 of 8 December 2005. Subsequent resolutions are A/64/51 of 2 December 2009, A.66/42 of 2 December 2011, A/68/52 of 5 December 2013, A/70/35 of 7 December 2015, A/72/55 of 4 December 2017, A/74/65 of 12 December 2019, A/76/233 of 30 December 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution A/61/72 of 6 December 2006

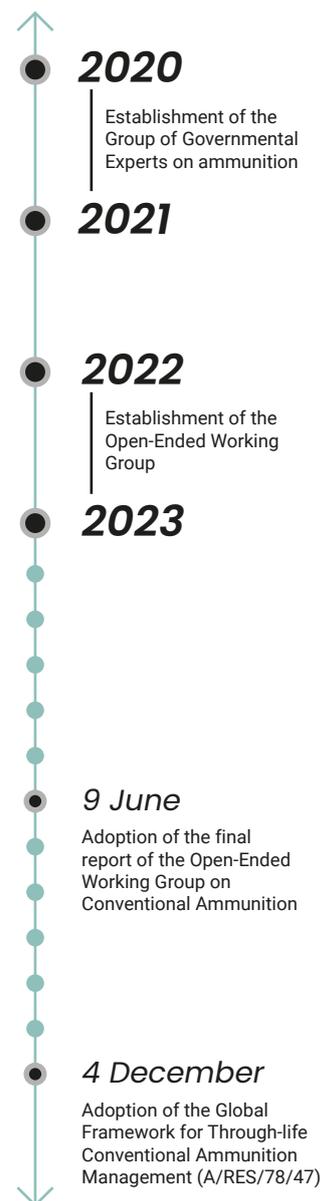
The 2008 Group of Governmental Experts was able to approach the ammunition issue comprehensively, concluding that the problem of its accumulation in surplus was largely a result of inadequate stockpile management. Therefore, the Group recommended that surplus accumulation be considered within the broader framework of the whole life management approach. As part of its recommendations, the Group recommended that the United Nations develop ammunition technical guidelines and establish an accompanying knowledge management platform to support States in the safe and secure management of their stockpiles.

This led to the development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) in 2011 and the establishment of the corresponding UN SaferGuard programme to serve as custodian of the Guidelines and to support outreach and capacity-building activities within the United Nations system.<sup>9</sup>

At the international level, momentum among States to address conventional ammunition had increased over the past 5 years, which led to the establishment of the 2020–2021 Group of Governmental Experts on ammunition as the second intergovernmental expert group to convene on the topic.<sup>10</sup> The Group adopted a comprehensive approach to understanding the safety and security risks posed by conventional ammunition, agreeing that such risks extended well beyond national stockpile facilities into every stage of the life cycle of ammunitions from production through use or disposal. Additionally, the Group underscored that through-life management of ammunition applied to all types of conventional ammunition.<sup>11</sup>

In line with its recommendations, the General Assembly decided to establish 2022-2023 Open-Ended Working Group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management.<sup>12</sup>

The Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition held four substantive sessions in 2022-2023. On 9 June 2023 the Group adopted its final report without a vote and agreed to recommend to the General Assembly, at its seventy-eighth session, the adoption of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.<sup>13</sup> On 4 December 2023, the General Assembly adopted the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management through resolution A/RES/78/47 with broad support by a vote of 176-0-5.<sup>14</sup>



## What is conventional ammunition?

The Global Framework does not set out a definition of ‘conventional ammunition’, though the **Global Framework specifies the promotion of through-life management of “all types of conventional ammunition, from small-calibre ammunition to the largest conventional ammunition” as the aim of the Global Framework.**

**IATG** According to the IATG, conventional ammunition is defined as “A complete device, such as a missile, shell, mine, or demolition store, that is charged with explosives, propellants, pyrotechnics, or initiating composition for use in connection with offence, defence, training, or non-operational purposes, including parts of weapon systems containing explosives.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/ammunition/un-safeguard>.

<sup>10</sup> The Group of Governmental Experts was established pursuant to resolution A/72/55.

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55 on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, 14 September 2021, A/76/324.

<sup>12</sup> Resolution A/76/233, 24 December 2021 established the Open-ended Working Group.

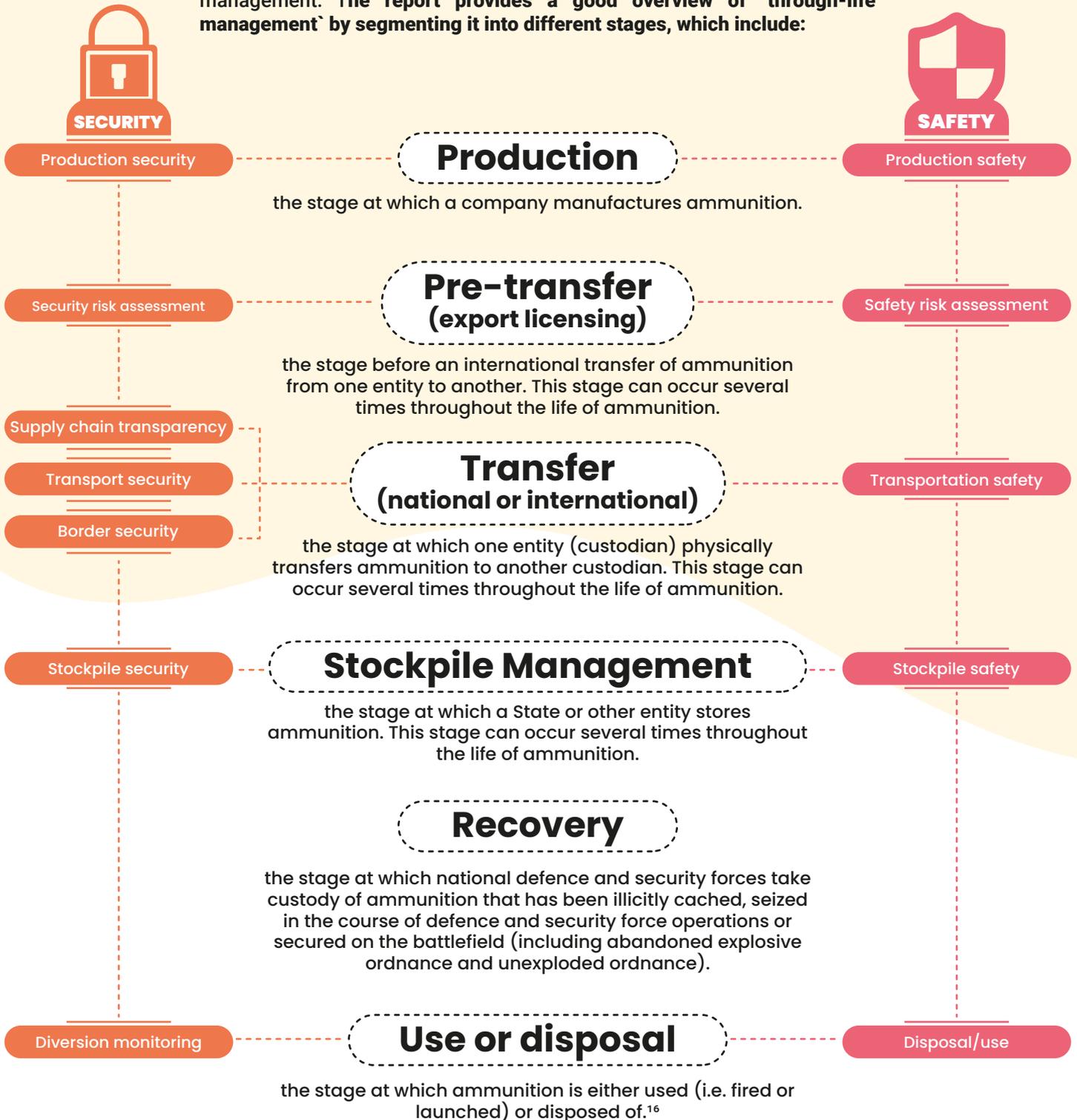
<sup>13</sup> A/78/111, 16 June 2023

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.undocs.org/A/RES/78/47>.

<sup>15</sup> IATG 01.40, para. 3.56, 2021

# What is ‘through-life conventional ammunition management’?

The 2021 report of the Group of Governmental Experts adopted a through-life management approach when considering the safety and security risks, as well as measures to promote safe, secure and sustainable ammunition management. The report provides a good overview of ‘through-life management’ by segmenting it into different stages, which include:



<sup>16</sup> A/76/324, para. 24

# Main provisions

The Global Framework sets out 15 objectives for safe, secure, and sustainable through-life conventional ammunition management. Each of the objectives identifies firstly, a number of common enabling measures which all States commit to and secondly, a number of possible additional enabling measures that could contribute to achieving each objective in specific national, sub-regional or regional contexts. The Annex of the Global Framework sets out the rationales underpinning the objectives, describing their relevance and linking them to the individual measures, thereby assisting in understanding of the Global Framework.

The Global Framework also commits States to support international cooperation and assistance. States have committed to cooperate and coordinate with each other in efforts to strengthen through-life conventional ammunition management at the national, subregional, regional and global levels and to establish and strengthen partnerships including with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, and relevant non-governmental organisations, academia, research institutions and the private sector, including industry. Amongst other things, States are also to designate a national point of contact for voluntary information sharing relating to the implementation of the Global Framework and regional and subregional organizations are also encouraged to do the same. The Global Framework also promotes the exchange of experiences and lessons learned and recognizes the need for seeking and providing assistance - including technology transfers, technical, material, financial, legal assistance, gender mainstreaming and expertise for capacity-building and knowledge management - while maintaining strong national ownership.

To ensure effective implementation, the Global Framework lays out a dedicated follow-up and review process. It consists of a Preparatory Meeting of States in 2025, the submission of voluntary initial overviews over its national implementation in 2026 followed later by voluntary national reports and updates, and a Meeting of States in 2027 to review the implementation of the Global Framework and to determine the convening of subsequent Meetings of States, as well as governmental Technical Experts Meetings.

The 15 objectives are summarised below:

01

**Use, promote and, where appropriate, enhance relevant international standards, guidelines and good practices on safe, secure and sustainable through-life conventional ammunition management**

This objective is focused on the use of the IATG or corresponding standards or guidelines when taking actions to enhance through-life conventional ammunition management. The rationale for this objective is that the IATG were designed for global application and greater use of the guidelines could positively impact the safe and secure management of conventional ammunition. But there is also a need to expand the IATG to include specific guidance on conventional ammunition security risks throughout its supply chain. The common enabling measures include prioritizing the use of the IATG in developing national measures and sustaining ongoing reviews of the IATG.

02

**Adopt specific needs-driven and sustainable approaches to international cooperation and assistance, tailored to national, subregional or regional contexts, and prioritizing full recipient participation and ownership**

This objective focuses on the need to tailor international assistance to different national and/or subregional and regional circumstances. This includes broadening the number of national stakeholders involved in through-life conventional ammunition management decision-making and enhancing dialogue and feedback between providers and recipients.

The common enabling measures include prioritizing full and inclusive recipient participation and ownership in the development of through-life conventional ammunition management programmes supported through international cooperation and assistance.

03

### **Support, where appropriate, regional and subregional mechanisms that address through-life conventional ammunition management**

Objective 3 acknowledges that States may share greater commonalities in terms of conventional ammunition challenges and solutions at the regional and subregional levels than they do globally. The common enabling measure is to encourage and support exchanges and cooperation on through-life conventional ammunition management at regional and subregional levels. Additional possible enabling measures include considering establishing processes, such as comprehensive road maps and/or action plans.

04

### **Prioritize the sustainability of relevant national authorities' capabilities in through-life conventional ammunition management**

Objective 4 focuses on organizational capabilities. The term “capability enabling lines” refers to the ability across an organization (e.g. a Ministry of Defence) to manage and allocate resources to produce a desired capability. These capability enabling lines include doctrine and concepts, organization, training, material, personnel, finances, infrastructure, and safety and security.

Common enabling measures include promoting developing, managing and sustaining adequate national processes, functional roles and capability enabling lines required for effective through-life conventional ammunition management.

05

### **Strive for the adequate systematic and sustainable surveillance of conventional ammunition in national stockpiles**

Of all through-life conventional ammunition management activities, systematic conventional ammunition surveillance requires the highest technical capability. Surveillance is the thorough gathering and assessment of all data on a unit of conventional ammunition to determine its condition throughout its life. However, many States lack the necessary conventional ammunition surveillance capability, meaning there is a threat of unplanned ammunition explosions. Developing adequate systematic conventional ammunition surveillance capability is a major undertaking. As such, objective 5 highlights the importance of capacity-building and training of personnel, the provision of appropriate testing facilities and the continued development of guidance.

06

### **Employ adequate risk reduction processes for the management of national conventional ammunition stockpiles**

Objective 6 focuses on risk reduction processes to have an immediate effect on the risks posed by unsafely stored national conventional ammunition stockpiles. One of the most efficient means of reducing and/or mitigating the risks of an unplanned conventional ammunition explosion is the use of quantity limits and separation distances. Accompanying measures include defining maximum quantities of explosives for each conventional ammunition site and only storing compatible ammunition types together.

07

### **Establish adequate through-life systems for inventory management and record-keeping of conventional ammunition under national ownership and control**

Adequate national conventional ammunition stockpile inventory management and record-keeping systems are needed so that a State can classify, quantify and identify the location of conventional ammunition under national ownership and control. States that are unable to do so could face difficulties in, inter alia, forecasting conventional ammunition requirements in the event of a need for self-defence; efficiently scheduling conventional ammunition procurement to replace unserviceable or obsolete conventional ammunition; and cost effectively replenishing the national conventional ammunition stockpile.

Common enabling measures include strengthening national capacities for adequate inventory management and record-keeping systems; prioritizing international cooperation and technology transfers to strengthen these capacities in developing countries.

08

### **Promote supply chain transparency to comprehensively minimize and mitigate the risks of diversion when authorizing conventional ammunition transfers**

One of the main aims of the Global Framework is to address the diversion of legally held ammunition into the illicit market, which can occur at any point along the conventional ammunition supply chain. Because diversion is difficult to fully address post-transfer, promoting supply chain transparency (including knowing more about the onward supply chain) and considering diversion risks prior to transfers contribute to reducing diversion.

Common enabling measures include:

- Integrating consideration of diversion risk into national conventional ammunition transfer control systems, and promote the disclosure of parties to the onward transfer chain in transfer licence applications;
- Encouraging bilateral pre- and post-delivery cooperation between originating and recipient States;
- Voluntarily information sharing on cases of diversion;
- Assessing whether there is an unacceptable risk of diversion when considering authorizing conventional ammunition transfers, including, inter alia, to areas affected by armed conflict;
- Denying transfers to unauthorized recipients, including non-State actors engaged in criminal and terrorist activities.

Possible enabling measures include reducing the risks of conventional ammunition diversion to unauthorized recipients by encouraging national transfer control authorities to consider diversion risks including considering the end use and end user's legitimacy.

09

**Mitigate the risk of post-transfer conventional ammunition diversion, including through end-user certificates and functionally equivalent documents in accordance with bilaterally determined clauses**

Objective 9 is focused on end-user certificates and functionally equivalent documents. End-user certification may serve two purposes: (a) to establish the identity of the end user and the declared end use, which allows the authorizing State to assess whether that end user or end use poses a diversion risk; and (b) to ensure that the end user does not re-transfer conventional ammunition to a party that was not the object of the originating State's pre-transfer diversion risk assessment. States are encouraged to consider the routine use of end-user certificates, or functionally equivalent documents, in which the end user and, if bilaterally agreed, end use are identified for international transfers of conventional ammunition.

10

**Deny unauthorized recipients, including criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists, access to usable cached, abandoned and uncleared conventional ammunition and its energetic material**

The explosive material within conventional ammunition can provide terrorists – and certain criminal groups – with safer, more reliable and more enhanced performance than would typically be achieved through the production of homemade explosives. Preventing the diversion, acquisition and illicit transfer of all conventional weapons, ammunition, and related materiel to, by and among unauthorized recipients, including criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists, is the focus of objective 10.

Common enabling measures include prioritizing clearance of abandoned unexploded ordnance and the safeguarding, safe storage, recovery and disposal of unguarded legacy or obsolete stockpiles of conventional ammunition that are still operational, and which are not under national ownership and control.

11

**Enhance the marking and tracing of conventional ammunition under national ownership and control**

With many types of conventional ammunition in national stockpiles, the primary identifier is the lot number, which is identical for all units in that lot. Lots can have volumes ranging from thousands to millions of units making it challenging for authorities investigating seized or recovered conventional ammunition. One possible solution is the application of 'sublot' numbers at the time of manufacture. These numbers serve to subdivide the lot. Basic markings applied to individual units of conventional ammunition (identifying the manufacturer and year of production) can also be employed in some cases to help detect and monitor ammunition diversion. New technologies and processes may offer cost-effective solutions for individual marking during and after manufacture (i.e. printing, stamping, laser marking, the application of microtags or chemical tagging). States are to consider applying minimum standards on markings (such as manufacturer and year of production) and collective identifiers (such as lot and batch numbers) as an integrated part of their regular manufacturing process.

12

**Foster voluntary information-sharing on subregional, regional and international conventional ammunition diversion and illicit trafficking**

The rationale for this objective is that competent national authorities tasked with interdiction, criminal investigations or involved in criminal judicial proceedings into cross-border conventional ammunition trafficking benefit from access to information, shared on a voluntary basis, that identifies seized and recovered conventional ammunition, inter alia, by its type, calibre, lot number (where applicable), manufacturer, mode of shipping or mode of concealment. Further, States should give regard to the risk posed by the characteristics of items, including to the particular risks posed by the diversion of easily trafficked small-calibre ammunition or technologically advanced conventional ammunition systems, such as ammunition for man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and ammunition for anti-tank guided weapon systems (ATGW).

13

**Enhance, where consistent with national laws, data collection and analysis by competent national authorities on diverted conventional ammunition**

Collecting data on seized and recovered conventional ammunition, within the context of national law enforcement and customs and border control operations, is fundamental to identifying, analysing and redressing diversion. In some instances, competent national authorities overlook conventional ammunition while investigating illicit weapon trafficking. More widespread and granular data collection and analysis of diverted conventional ammunition would support efforts to control conventional ammunition diversion and trafficking and refine tools to address it. This information can also support transfer licensing risk assessments and, ultimately, the administration and, if necessary, revision of transfer control laws, regulations and processes.

14

**Strengthen gender mainstreaming and the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in through-life conventional ammunition management**

This objective reflects the increased recognition of the importance for the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation and leadership of women in all aspects of through-life conventional ammunition management. However, there remain gaps in mainstreaming a gender perspective into through-life conventional ammunition management activities and in better understanding the implications of the differential impacts resulting from ineffective through-life management of conventional ammunition on women, men, girls and boys. A gender perspective provides key insights into how individuals and groups are differentially impacted by armed conflict and weapons, and gender mainstreaming makes for better and more effective arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation. This objective highlights the need to consider conventional ammunition management through its life-cycle, using a gender analysis, in order to identify relevant entry points for gender mainstreaming.

15

**Encourage cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and civil society, academia, research institutions and industry, to enhance through-life conventional ammunition management**

Objective 15 recognises that non-governmental sectors, including non-governmental organizations, academia, research institutions and industry could have complementary roles to play in relevant fields of through-life conventional ammunition management. This includes in areas such as: technological developments pertaining to the safety, security and traceability of conventional ammunition; the development of through-life supply chain management systems; investigations into conventional ammunition accidents; and the evaluation of programmes that are designed to enhance through-life conventional ammunition management.

# ***Synergies with other instruments on conventional arms control***

The Global Framework is a collective step forward in solidifying through-life conventional ammunition management as an issue of standalone concern which requires sustained attention from the international community. It has created a dedicated and comprehensive regulatory instrument on conventional ammunition at the international level, while complementing and reinforcing relevant existing international and regional instruments on conventional arms control. Beyond the existing international and region instruments, the Global Framework sets a new benchmark by expanding control measures to all conventional ammunition and by covering a broader range of issues.

The regional instrument most relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean is the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).<sup>17</sup> With respect to existing legally binding international instruments on conventional arms control, the Firearms Protocol<sup>18</sup> (Protocol to the Conventional against Transnational Organized Crime) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) are also relevant.

There are also a number of politically binding instruments. The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA)<sup>19</sup> and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI)<sup>20</sup> are politically binding frameworks which set out measures for States to implement. While there have been ongoing discussions on the inclusion of ammunition within the PoA and the ITI, no consensus has been reached, however some States have chosen to include ammunition controls within the scope of the PoA in their implementation efforts.

In addition, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), established through a mandate of the UN General Assembly, are the focus of Objective 1 of the Global Framework. The IATG were designed for global application and their inclusion in the Global Framework could result in a greater use of the guidelines that could positively impact the safe and secure management of conventional ammunition and the implementation of the Global Framework as a whole.

The Central America Security Strategy (Estrategia de Seguridad de Centroamérica, short ESCA)<sup>21</sup> is an instrument adopted in 2007 by countries in the Central American Integration System (SICA) that includes crime reduction and violence prevention amongst its key objectives. This strategy is the pivot for the development of policies, programmes, strategies, and actions based on four major components: a) violence prevention; b) combating crime; c) institutional strengthening; and d) rehabilitation, reinsertion and prison security. Activities focused on crime reduction include providing specialized information to the officials responsible for the fight against drug trafficking, money laundering, arms trafficking, illicit trafficking and human trafficking, femicide and other high-impact crimes in the region. Violence prevention focuses on developing policies, programs, strategies and actions to prevent a range of violence including illicit arms trafficking armed violence and gender violence. The ESCA also facilitates coordination and the exchange of information and experiences among the various operational bodies and agencies in the region.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter\\_american\\_treaties\\_A-63\\_illicit\\_manufacturing\\_trafficking\\_firearms\\_ammunition\\_explosives.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-63_illicit_manufacturing_trafficking_firearms_ammunition_explosives.asp)

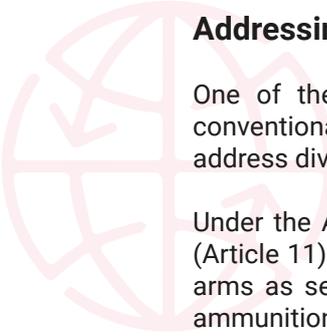
<sup>18</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/recenttexts/18-12\\_c\\_e.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/recenttexts/18-12_c_e.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n01/507/20/pdf/n0150720.pdf?token=y2BDso5HYa2ydDompY&fe=true>

<sup>20</sup> [https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ITI\\_English.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ITI_English.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.sica.int/esca/inicio>

While these are all distinct instruments, there are areas of convergence between them and the Global Framework. Therefore, States parties to or participating in these instruments, when developing their national regulatory and policy frameworks to implement the objectives of the Global Framework, should not view these instruments in isolation. Rather, the instruments should be seen as enhancing and expanding interconnecting provisions to be integrated into national practice. Some of these interconnecting provisions are looked at below.



## Addressing diversion

One of the main objectives of the Global Framework is to address the diversion of conventional ammunition to unauthorized recipients. Objectives 8 to 13 lay out measures to address diversion.

Under the ATT, States Parties also have to take measures to prevent and detect diversion (Article 11). However, the ATT refers only to the diversion of the categories of conventional arms as set out in the UN Register of Conventional Arms (under Article 2(1)) and not to ammunition/munitions covered under Article 3 of the treaty.

The obligation established under article 11(2) of the ATT is that each exporting State Party: “shall seek to prevent the diversion of the transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2(1) through its national control system [...] by assessing the risk of diversion of the export and considering the establishment of mitigation measures such as confidence building measures or jointly developed and agreed programmes by the exporting and importing States.”

The ATT provides a few measures for States to consider when addressing diversion (risk assessment and establishment mitigation measures). However, the Global Framework provides more specific measures. For example, Objective 8 highlights a number of measures to improve supply chain transparency to reduce diversion. Objective 9 is focused on end-user certificates and functionally equivalent documents as a mitigation measure. These measures all apply as equally to conventional arms as it does to conventional ammunition.

Article 11 of the Firearms Protocol requires States to take measures to “increase the effectiveness of import, export and transit controls, including, where appropriate, border controls, and of police and customs transborder cooperation”. Similarly, under Article VIII (Security Measures) of the CIFTA States are to work towards eliminating loss or diversion by adopting “the necessary measures to ensure the security of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials imported into, exported from, or in transit through their respective territories.” The “necessary measures” are not specified in the CIFTA. However, the Global Framework sets out many specific measures States can take to ensure the security of ammunition (especially under Objectives 8-13).



## International cooperation and assistance

What is common across the international instruments and the CIFTA is the promotion of international (or regional) cooperation to tackle the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons and ammunition and their negative consequences.

The ITI has extensive provisions on international cooperation, which is not surprising since the successful tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons and ammunition is highly dependent on cooperation at all levels.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) requires cooperation between its States parties to implement the Treaty. Article 15 sets out a number of cooperative measures States are encouraged to

undertake, including sharing information regarding illicit activities and actors and in order to prevent and eradicate diversion of the conventional arms covered under the Treaty.

The Firearms Protocol requires States parties to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels to combat illicit manufacturing and trafficking (Art. 13). Particulars of such cooperation are not detailed, however cooperation that involves information-sharing is set out in detail in article 12 and includes sharing information on, for example, the means of concealment used in the illicit manufacturing of or trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and ways of detecting them.

International cooperation and assistance also underpin the Global Framework. Objective 2 makes it clear that sustainable through-life conventional ammunition management rests on States developing and maintaining their own national capabilities. However, international cooperation and assistance is crucial in the process of some States developing their own capacities and attaining overall success in sustainable through-life conventional ammunition management. The objective highlights the importance of tailoring assistance to the different national and/or subregional and regional circumstances as well as broadening the number of national stakeholders involved in through-life conventional ammunition management decision-making. The potential benefits of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation is also noted.

### **National focal points**

Establishing a focal point is also a point of synergy across the various instruments. Broadly, the role of a focal point is to act as a national liaison office between their State and the international community. One of the main roles of a national focal point is to exchange information implementation with other States and regional and international organizations.

The Global Framework also notes that States should designate a national point of contact for voluntary information sharing relating to the implementation of this Global Framework (para. 18). States are encouraged to provide technical support to the national point of contact, or to the relevant government official directly responsible, on matters related to through-life conventional ammunition management and the collection and analysis of data on conventional ammunition diversion, and to include up-to-date contact information for the national point of contact in voluntary national reports and updates.

Within the Global Framework regional and subregional organizations are also encouraged to designate similar points of contact and to promote cooperation and coordination among them. Under the PoA, regional organizations are also encouraged: to designate and share information on points of contact for work relating to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons; and to report on actions they have taken at the regional and subregional levels that support the implementation of the PoA.<sup>22</sup>

### **National control systems**

The Firearms Protocol, the PoA and ATT all require States to establish and maintain national control systems. Under the CIFTA (Article IX) States parties are to establish or maintain an effective system of export, import, and international transit licenses or authorizations for transfers of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials.

While the Global Framework does not speak to the creation of a national control system, it does refer to many elements that should be part of such a system. For example, one of

<sup>22</sup> <https://smallarms.un-arm.org/regional-organization>

Objective 8's enabling measures is to integrate consideration of diversion risk into national conventional ammunition transfer control systems and promote the disclosure of parties to the onward transfer chain in transfer licence applications. Objective 4 broadly sets out the enabling measure of developing adequate national processes for effective through-life conventional ammunition management. This would include the pre-transfer and transfer stages of through-life management.



## Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming in conventional arms control is one of the policy areas in which States have made significant progress in the last several years. Within the context of the PoA, while the word "gender" is not included in the original text, States began to address gender issues and moved beyond solely discussing women as victims. In the most recent Biennial Meetings of States, the outcome document called for "the full, equal, meaningful, and effective" participation of women and for States to conduct gender analyses on the effects of illicit small arms and light weapons trade and mainstream gender into PoA implementation efforts.<sup>23</sup>

Within the ATT, Article 7(4) requires that States Parties in their export assessments take into account the risk of the arms covered by the treaty "being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV or serious acts of violence against women and children".

Objective 14 of the Global Framework focuses on strengthening gender mainstreaming and the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in through-life conventional ammunition management. One of the common enabling measures is to increase understanding of the differentiated impact and humanitarian consequences of unplanned explosions at conventional ammunition sites, as well as the diversion of conventional ammunition, on women, men, girls and boys and their lives, livelihoods and human rights. Further, the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation and leadership of both women and men in conventional ammunition management policy, practice and decision-making is to be promoted.

Further, included in Objective 8 of the Global Framework as an additional possible enabling measure is that States consider the risk of diverted conventional ammunition being used to commit gender-based violence, and the differentiated impacts of diverted conventional ammunition on women, men, girls and boys, when considering diversion risks.

<sup>23</sup> BMS8 outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1, 12 July 2022), para. 9.

# ***Opportunities and potential challenges for implementation of the Global Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean***

In Latin American and the Caribbean, the widespread supply, availability, and proliferation of ammunition is a key enabler for the highest rates of armed violence in the world. The constant replenishment of ammunition leads to small arms and light weapons being used more frequently in homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean than in other parts of the world.<sup>24</sup>

There are a number of challenges in relation to ammunition in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. By its very nature, ammunition is difficult to trace. Ammunition control measures are usually less stringent than those for small arms and light weapons, with ammunition tending to be less frequently marked, recorded, monitored and regulated for example.

Some of the main reasons for the diversion of ammunition to unauthorised users are the lack of harmonized regulation and limited control over the purchase, sale and transfer of small arms ammunition. Diversion often occurs due to transfers without proper controls, unauthorized re-transfers or leaks/robberies/theft to both state and private arsenals.<sup>25</sup>

Poor physical security and ammunition management as well as limited infrastructure and resources, are also huge challenges in the region. Effectively managing ammunition stockpiles not only mitigates the risk of loss and theft but also prevents accidents and helps to identify obsolete or surplus weapons. However, such management is not widely addressed in national regulations.

A 2023 joint report by the Small Arms Survey and CARICOM IMPACS entitled 'Weapons Compass: The Caribbean Firearms Study' (Caribbean Firearms Study) identified a number of findings in relation to trafficking and diversion of ammunition in the Caribbean. These include, inter alia:

- "Where it could be determined, the average time between the manufacture and illicit use of ammunition is much shorter in the Caribbean than in Europe, suggesting that diversion from the legal sphere to illicit use often occurs relatively rapidly.

<sup>24</sup> This is noted in a seminar UNLIREC carried out in 2019 on ammunition control measures.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

- Cross-border trafficking appears to be the main source of illicit ammunition in the region, yet some criminals also rely on local sources.”<sup>26</sup>

Given these challenges, the Global Framework presents a number of opportunities for States in Latin America and the Caribbean to further build on some of the good practices already being undertaken to strengthen ammunition controls, including stockpile management, marking and measures to address diversion. It also provides a number of measures that can be integrated into national action plans that have been developed in line with the *Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030* (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap).

The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap provides a framework for developing national action plans. There are four main goals of the Firearms Roadmap, namely to:

1. reinforce regulatory frameworks governing firearms and ammunition;
2. reduce the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into, within and beyond the region;
3. bolster law enforcement capacity to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking and their illicit possession and misuse; and
4. systematically decrease the risk of diversion of firearms and ammunition from government- and non-government-owned arsenals.

The Global Framework and its measures can support states in meeting the goals of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. The specific measures outlined in the 15 objectives of the Global Framework can be applied at the national level to help meet the Roadmap goals. Also, as objective 2 of the Global Framework acknowledges, in some regions there are also established regional or subregional initiatives that are focused on, or have direct relevance for, through-life conventional ammunition management. The Roadmap is one such initiative.

The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap also takes an integrated approach on weapons and ammunition. It includes concrete Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which can serve the implementation as well as data collection and reporting under the Global Framework. For example, the Roadmap’s Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting Platform serves to collect and collate data on national progress against national action plans and to measure the regional progress of the Roadmap across the Caribbean until 2030. For example, in relation to Goal 4, Action 4.1.2 is to “Conduct periodic reviews and audits of national stockpiles and establish a peer review mechanism for voluntary inspections”. The KPIs include the number of national audits of physical stockpiles for government and non-governmental facilities.

The creation of regional roadmaps has expanded to Central America. In October 2022, States mandated the Organisation of American States, in coordination with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) and SICA, to support the development of a Central American Roadmap to Prevent the Illicit Proliferation and Trafficking of Firearms and Ammunition.<sup>27</sup> The development of the Roadmap provides an important opportunity to incorporate the enabling measures in the Global Framework and enable the implementation of existing global and regional instruments in tandem with the Global Framework.

<sup>26</sup> Fabre, Florquin, Karp and Shroeder, “Weapons Compass: The Caribbean Firearms Study”, Small Arms Survey and CARICOM IMPACS, April 2023, pg. 102.

<sup>27</sup> AG/RES. 2986 (LII-O/22) Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach.

States in Latin America and the Caribbean are also already implementing some aspects of the Global Framework.<sup>28</sup> These practices can provide guidance to other States. For example, Brazil has been implementing Objective 11 of the Global Framework (Enhance the marking and tracing of conventional ammunition under national ownership and control) which encourages States to apply minimum standards on markings (such as manufacturer and year of production) and collective identifiers (such as lot and batch numbers) as an integrated part of their regular manufacturing process. Brazil's Disarmament Statute (2003), Chapter V, Article 23, specifies that all ammunition manufactured in Brazil must be marked and packaged in boxes in a way that makes it possible to identify the manufacturer, purchaser, and batch number. National authorities may only purchase such identifiable ammunition. In the Dominican Republic with the entry into force of the new Law for the Control and Regulation of Arms, Ammunition and Related Materials ammunition must be duly identified by means of the marking made by the manufacturer or importer, at the very moment of its manufacture or entry into the country. That marking is made on the cartridge base and includes the following elements: (1) name of the manufacturer, (2) calibre, (3) year of manufacture, (4) lot number related to the number of imports made, and (5) country digits. In the case of ammunition exports, that same information is stamped on the boxes and packaging, together with the importer's name, city and country and the year and month of import.<sup>29</sup>

Another example is Panama which adopted measures towards implementing Objective 10 (Deny unauthorized recipients, including criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists, access to usable cached, abandoned and uncleared conventional ammunition and its energetic material) of the Global Framework. One of Objective 10's enabling measures is the building of national processes on responsible disposal, preferably through destruction of obsolete and unserviceable conventional ammunition. To date 410.617 rounds of ammunition have been destroyed. In August 2022, Panama received the first certification in ammunition destruction from the Organization of American States who verified the audit, disposal and destruction process in accordance with international practices.<sup>30</sup>

These are just a few examples of measures taken by countries in the region to improve their control of conventional ammunition.

<sup>28</sup> This paper cites just a few examples of good practices being implemented in the region. For a fuller understanding of measures on ammunition controls, see UNLIREC's 2020 paper "Ammunition Control Measures in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Legal Approach" which collected the region's regulations on firearms ammunition in different aspects (marking, tracing, international transfers, among others).

<sup>29</sup> The Dominican Republic, Articles 9 and 10. Law No. 631-16 (2016).

<sup>30</sup> Republic of Panama, Ministry of Public Security, August 26, 2022:

<https://www.minseg.gob.pa/2022/08/panama-recibe-de-la-oea-la-primera-certificacion-en-destruccion-de-municiones/#:~:text=Mil%20%20armas%20de%20fuego,conforme%20a%20las%20pr%C3%A1cticas%20internacionales>

# Recommendations for Latin America and the Caribbean

As is rooted in the Global Framework, curbing the many adverse effects of diversion and insufficient management of ammunition is only possible if States include ammunition in their arms control policies, with the differential treatment that it requires, both at the national level as well as at the regional level. Below are a number of recommendations to support the implementation of the objectives in the Global Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## 01

### Formalise the regional sharing of data on firearm crimes and seizures

The Caribbean Firearms Study made some recommendations in relation to strengthening controls on ammunition. These recommendations are particularly relevant in light of the measures outlined in the Global Framework and are applicable in both the Caribbean and Latin American region.

At the regional level, the report notes that law enforcement and forensic units that collect and process evidence at crime scenes offer unique opportunities for monitoring illicit ammunition and firearms and their possible origins.<sup>31</sup>

It recommends that States “standardize and formalize the regional sharing of data on firearm crimes and seizures to facilitate the querying and sharing of information regarding fired bullets and cartridge cases nationally, regionally, and internationally using the automated firearm identification systems available (such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network or CARICOM Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network).” It further recommends that the recording and analysis of seized ammunition data is integrated into the standard operating procedures of forensic, customs, and other relevant institutions.<sup>32</sup>

This recommendation is reinforced by the Global Framework that emphasises that data collection and analysis by competent national authorities on diverted conventional ammunition is fundamental to addressing diversion. As the rationale for Objective 13 notes, more widespread and granular data collection and analysis of diverted conventional ammunition would support efforts to control conventional ammunition diversion and trafficking and refine tools to address it.

<sup>31</sup> Fabre, Florquin, Karp and Shroeder, “Weapons Compass: The Caribbean Firearms Study”, Small Arms Survey and CARICOM IMPACS, April 2023, pg. 102.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. pg. 22 and pg. 102.

## 02

**Consider marking of ammunition for state security agencies**

Marking of ammunition is also an area that should be focused on by States in the Latin American and Caribbean region, especially ammunition destined for state stockpiles, legal retailers, and shooting ranges. As the Caribbean Firearms Study notes, this would enable them to be identified more quickly when seized or recovered at crime scenes. The report also recommends States consider “marking officially issued and imported ammunition for state security agencies and their personnel to reduce diversion risks and facilitate the identification of the authorized importer, batch number, and end user.” Further, where it is appropriate, tracing requests should be initiated on seized ammunition, especially recently produced ammunition that is seized in its original packaging (which typically indicates the relevant lot or batch number).<sup>33</sup>

Implementing these recommendations would help to meet Objective 11 of the Global Framework which is focused on enhancing the marking and tracing of ammunition. Given the various challenges associated with marking ammunition, the Global Framework suggests, as one solution, that procuring States request that the manufacturer apply ‘sublot’ numbers. These numbers are a subset of the actual or head lot number and serve to subdivide the lot. If used, sublot marking increases the possibility of identifying the State customer or end user in relevant records. The Global Framework also encourages that basic markings applied to individual units of conventional ammunition (identifying the manufacturer and year of production) could help detect and monitor ammunition diversion. Here, the experience of Brazil in marking of ammunition is an example for other States to consider.

## 03

**Enhance attention to ammunition stockpile management**

The adoption of the Global Framework provides an opportunity for states in Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance their attention to stockpile management of ammunition to ensure the safe, secure and effective control of ammunition stockpiles. While many States in the region have been reviewing their national legislation and policies in relation to firearms and conventional arms control, less attention has been paid to ensuring that national legislation and regulations related to ammunition management are comprehensive, up-to-date, and enforceable. This includes incorporating the Global Framework and best practices into domestic legal frameworks.

## 04

**Strengthen regional cooperation to include more focus on ammunition**

There is significant cooperation in the Latin American and Caribbean region focused on areas such as conventional arms control (including small arms), addressing trafficking, stockpile security and destruction of weapons. The adoption of the Global Framework is an opportunity for the region to strengthen its cooperation in the area of ammunition. This could include the development of standardized procedures and protocols for stockpile management of ammunition, enhanced information sharing, and greater use of the IATG to enhance through-life conventional ammunition management.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

**05**

### **Use the regional firearms roadmap processes to promote the implementation of the Global Framework**

The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap and the Central American Roadmap that is being developed provide important vehicles for the implementation of the Global Framework and its measures. These Roadmaps have direct relevance for through-life conventional ammunition management. States, as they develop their national action plans to implement the Roadmaps are encouraged to take an integrated approach on weapons and ammunition and incorporate the enabling measures contained in the Global Framework.

**06**

### **Sensibilization across Latin America and the Caribbean on the Global Framework**

Now that the Global Framework has been adopted, it would be important to ensure that officials in the region are familiar with its objectives and the measures adopted within the Framework. Officials who work in the areas of conventional arms and ammunition controls could identify areas where the Global Framework could be translated into action at the national and regional levels through the use of existing legislation, national action plans and regional roadmaps. Regional sensibilization would also provide an opportunity for States to learn about existing good practices already being implemented that support measures in the Global Framework.



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