The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe continues playing an active and crucial role in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects. By strengthening the complementarity and seeking synergies in international processes, in particular on a regional level, the OSCE actively contributes to the implementation of the Programme of Action on SALW and aims of reducing illicit arms flows in line with the Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.4.

Politico-military security, conflict prevention and resolution, terrorism and crime prevention, human rights and sustainable socio-economic development lie in the sphere of the OSCE responsibilities and are the subject of its direct activities for early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the region.

On Normative aspects

Measures designed to curb arms diversion, illicit manufacture, and the misuse of transferred arms are well-embedded in the OSCE Documents on SALW and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA), and its Handbook no Best Practices, covering each stage of the life-cycle of SALW. They commit participating States to a number of standards, which, if fully implemented, would assist States in their efforts to abide by many of the paragraphs on national implementation in the PoA.

Since the OSCE includes most of major world producers and exporters of SALW it strives to undertake all necessary measures to establish a reliable barrier preventing diversion and leakage of small arms into the illegal market. The OSCE Document on SALW provides the framework for preventing diversion of SALW into illicit trafficking. To strengthen the OSCE’s efforts in this regard and taken into consideration the threats posed by the illicit
conversion, transformation or reactivation of weapons, the OSCE adopted most recently its Best Practice Guide on Deactivation of SALW, containing information about international commitments and suggesting approaches and procedures to ensure the permanent deactivation of SALW, including operational measures such as: national legislation, technical specifications for SALW deactivation standards, designation of inspection authorities, as well as marking and record-keeping. The adoption of common standards across participating States will reduce the risks posed by deactivated weapons. The benefits of collaboration when determining technical specifications with other participating States are self-evident. The Guide also suggests that the development of deactivation technical specifications should be driven by risk and threat assessment together with an assessment of the development of engineering techniques and capabilities. Established standards recognise different types of SALW and specify the exact processes to be applied to their essential component parts and other parts if applicable.

The measures prescribed by this Guide are regarded as minimum standards for SALW deactivation. The OSCE participating States may adopt more stringent regulations at national level. Also, the OSCE’s newly adopted deactivation standards will form the basis for future efforts in preventing diversion of SALW in the OSCE area and beyond.

The best practice guide on Deactivation on SALW is an addition to the OSCE’s Handbook of Best Practices on SALW. The OSCE Handbook on Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons covers all stages of a weapon's life cycle, advising states on responsible conduct in this area, starting with manufacturing, the proper marking of small arms, accurate and sustained record keeping, export control criteria and transparency about transfers, and finishing with deactivation, destruction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

Information exchange on SALW

According to the Programme of Action requirements, the OSCE has not only the Point of Contact and information exchange regime regarding SALW, but also regular overviews of the information provided by participating States.

The level of implementation of annual SALW information exchanges is stable throughout the years. On a yearly basis participating States are reporting the updates through the one-off information on SALW. Participating States are using the OSCE SALW Questionnaire to provide information on most of the commitments: on brokering, end-user certificates,
national stockpile management and security procedures, marking, control over manufacturing, national legislation, and procedures for destruction. Reporting is carried out when necessary (updates) by June 30th. Each year around 15-20 out of 57 participating States provide updates on their policies covered in the one-off SALW questionnaire.

On the one hand, providing such kind of annual data allow building confidence among people and states, and are relevant for the purposes both of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation. On the other hand, the exchange of information on different aspects of respective national activities forms a basis for capacity building to jointly address risks and challenges related to uncontrolled spread of SALW.

By encouraging transparency and information exchange in 2016 it was decided that the most of the information on SALW would be made available to the public through posting on the OSCE’s public website. Exempted from this public information exchange is the import and export of SALW.

Contributing to transparency, predictability and stability and facilitating the synergies in reporting, the OSCE in cooperation with the UNODA launched an online reporting tool on SALW in 2017, allowing participating States to simultaneously submit national SALW reports to both the OSCE and the UNODA. The simultaneous submission contributes to lessen the reporting burden on participating States and to encourage a co-ordinated approach to reporting. Clearly the tool needs to be further developed, promoted and there is need for more training on the Tool.

On SALW/SCA projects

When referring to surplus stocks from the Cold-War period, unresolved conflicts, or countries in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation in the OSCE area, the OSCE spear no effort in eliminating the SALW and CA surpluses, and improve the life-cycle management of SALW and CA stockpiles. In this regard, the OSCE has a pro-active, coordinated, and sub-regional approach to secure management of stockpiles and destruction of SALW and conventional ammunition, by building local capacity, sharing best practices, applying the OSCE assistance mechanism and lessons learned, and pooling resources in order to maximize their efficiency.

Already for more than 15 years participating States can reach out to each other and the OSCE as organization to assist them in issues pertaining to small arms and light weapons, as well as to stockpiles of ammunition. Each year the OSCE implements 15-20 SALW and SCA projects.
The OSCE provides for **safe and secure storage** of small arms and light weapons, and conventional ammunition in this way contributing to **prevention of the diversion** of the weapons and ammunition to illicit markets.

- Also, aging, excess and unstable stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions pose dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. You might have heard of a terrible accident in September last year (2017) at the ammunition depot in **Ukraine** with more than 83,000 tonnes of ammunition in storage near the village of Kalynivka. This is exactly the place from where the OSCE has removed more than 3,000 tonnes of rocket fuel components back in 2009-2010. One could only guess what the consequences could be, had the OSCE not implemented that project at all.

- Also, this year in June we’ll be able to announce that thanks to the OSCE’s efforts, **Belarus** is clean from the rocket fuel components that pose a serious risk to population and environment.

During last six years, a total of **30 projects** were implemented in four OSCE regions with donor assistance amounting to **EUR 35 million**. There are a number of projects ongoing for instance; in Ukraine building humanitarian demining capacity; in Moldova just finalized stockpile management projects; in Georgia disposing cluster and aviation bombs and artillery rounds; in Tajikistan supporting the renovation of one SALW storage site. An overarching project on Strengthening OSCE action against the illicit proliferation of SALW and SCA has been launched recently to assist the participating States to be able to better plan, implement and if necessary strengthening their commitments against the illicit proliferation of SALW/CA.

- The OSCE also conducts **capacity building trainings** for assessment teams on different aspects of ammunition and the assessment of ammunition depots, stockpile management and security, cross-border trafficking and destruction. All these training efforts and projects are bringing participating States closer to their goals as committed under the SALW and SCA documents, but also the UN Programme of Action on SALW and the International Tracing Instrument.

When dealing with weapons, ammunition and explosives, there is a strong interrelation of military and other security forces in their needs for physical safety and security of their depots. In this regard we’ve noticed that **the focus shifts from** projects focused at weapons and ammunition depots and surplus of weapons and ammunition, **towards** the more dynamic
aspects of the illicit flows of these materials by criminal and terrorist entities. This is obviously a much more difficult and multi-level process to counter.

Also, the nature of assistance requests and the interest of the donor community are expanding. It is adapting to the risks emanating from the current day threats. They do not only lie in the prevention of weapons and ammunition falling into the wrong hands. But we also need to focus on the prevention of proliferation and accumulation of weapons, ammunition and explosives before they emerge in the networks of organized crime and terrorists. Once that happens, it is much more difficult to deal with these issues. We are then dealing with intelligence, interception, recordkeeping of seized contraband, cross-border movements, and interagency coordination. The amount of stakeholders almost expands exponentially.

However, as OSCE we will certainly not shy away from those efforts. On the contrary - capacity building, networking and a more flexible and all-inclusive assistance mechanism and funding is what the OSCE needs to be focused on. We will keep reaching out and collaborating with other international organizations such as UNODA, UNODC, UNIDIR, UNDP, SEESAC, NATO, CSTO, EU and NGOs to ensure coordination of effort. With the accumulated expertise of participating States and the international network the regional efforts of the OSCE is making a difference!

**Gender aspects**

Gender aspects have become an integral part of the assistance projects and gives due consideration to the impact of uncontrolled spread of SALW on women and children.

In this regard let me highlight that in February 2018 OSCE and UNODA jointly organized the training course on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation for 46 women from the OSCE region and the Organization’s Partners for Co-operation in Vienna. The course was held in the framework of the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security and the DNP Education Partnership.

The training course aimed to empower women and contribute to a deeper understanding of key conceptual and analytical issues in the field of conflict prevention, arms control and confidence- and security-building measures with a specific focus on the OSCE and its

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1 The Disarmament and Non-proliferation (DNP) Education Partnership is an initiative coordinated by UNODA in Vienna with 30 global and regional organizations, NGOs, media and research centers which joined forces to take common action on assembling educational opportunities on a broad range of issues related to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and development.
relevant instruments. The course further had the goal to improve the knowledge of and increase women’s participation in policymaking, planning and implementation processes in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Participants learned about the different institutions active in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the technologies associated with it and the relationship between disarmament and development. Issues such as illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons as well as the OSCE’s efforts in strengthening safety and security of stockpiles of SALW and conventional ammunition were discussed extensively. The participants also met with gender champions, engaged in debates on gender equality and learned about the different impact disarmament and non-proliferation activities have on women and men, as well as the role women play in the field.

These activities help to advance the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion let me highlight once more the importance of the regional efforts in implementing and seeking synergies with the PoA on SALW and in promoting the sustainable development goals, in particular, in reducing illicit arms flows. The OSCE has accomplished a number of objectives in order to establish and advance effective SALW control mechanisms, the most significant ones being:

- the adoption of the minimum standards for all aspects in the life-cycle of SALW and the management thereof, including guideline on best practices, such as the deactivation of SALW;

- facilitating the synergies in reporting the Online reporting tool on SALW that was launched for simultaneous submissions to the OSCE and UNODA;

- also, promoting implementation of the UNSCR on Women, Peace and Security through the training programme for women on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area, and seeking to have the gender aspects as an integral part of the OSCE’s assistance projects on SALW and SCA;

- through implementation of the SALW/SCA projects promoting safe and secure storage, timely destructions, capacity building, effective collaborations on combatting
proliferation and accumulation of weapons, ammunition and explosives to contribute to a safer and more secure world.

Thank you.