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GICHD | CIDHG



**Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**

**Expert Meeting Protocol V**

**Generic Preventative Measures**

**25 April 2012**

**GICHD Statement on Ammunition Safety Management**

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○ Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

We see an increased importance of - and attention to - munitions management. In sessions earlier in the week the widespread problem of diversion or illicit use of materials from unsecured stores, abandoned and unexploded ordnance as a source for IEDs has been presented and discussed under Amended Protocol II. The securing of munitions stores and dumps and destruction of appropriate stockpiles and ERW should remain one of the principal priorities in the aftermath of armed conflict.

Aging, excess, and unstable stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions however also pose a threat of accidental explosion, which can cause humanitarian disasters.

○ Accidents occur regularly, as we have seen from data presented yesterday - including the Congo Brazzaville explosion last month which resulted in so many casualties and left in excess of 13,000 homeless.

Increasingly, Mine Action Operators are equipping themselves and being tasked with activities relating to safety aspects of munitions management particularly in developing countries (including the provision of assistance in stockpile destruction of aging, excess and banned items). Much of the assistance follows basic principles concerning construction and maintenance of ammunition storage facilities and enforcement of appropriate security considerations. This may involve inspecting and categorizing munitions, redesigning facilities - promoting suitable ventilation, appropriate stacking practices for ammunition, routines for regular inspections and recording of stores, installation of locks and doors (fit



for purpose), provision of basic firefighting equipment, security fencing, roofing and advice on staffing, security arrangements .. and so on. Best practices are further outlined in the GICHD publication: A Guide to Ammunition Storage which provides:

- o An overview of Standards and Norms (Chapter 2)
- o Safe Storage of Ammunition (Chapter 3)
- o Control of Ammunition Storage Areas (Chapter 4)

> The International Mine Action Standards – for which the GICHD has a secretariat and development function - also addresses the subject of Storage, Handling and Transportation of Explosives. Such reference material complements other guidelines, manuals and best practices published by NATO, OSCE, individual governments and particularly the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines of the UN.

Recently the GICHD allocated greater resources to support Ammunition Safety Management activities – to develop assessment and training guidelines and policy for mine action operators. On request, the GICHD also conducts direct assessments, offers advice and technical assistance on safe ammunition storage and stockpile destruction. We are looking to strengthen our relationships with NAMSA and our traditional partners in National Authorities, the UN and Operators in this regard.

Pilar, from the Small Arms Survey in a presentation yesterday stressed the importance of information approaches to ammunition storage. In this vein the GICHD has embarked on further development of the Information Management System for Mine Action, IMSMA, for wider application - beyond the representation and management of mine and ERW contamination and associated survey and clearance operations in the field. Many operators and States can improve Information Management Systems associated with ammunition storage issues. In Albania, IMSMA is being used for post accident activities related to PSSM. The national authority AMMCO is using IMSMA to coordinate operational activities in 'hot spots' - former ammunition stores that were blown up during the civil unrest in 1997. There are also ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Defense to potentially use IMSMA in a broader role to support Ammunition Safety Management.