



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR /PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

TO 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**

JUNE 26, 2006, New York

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Mr. President,

The Jamaican delegation congratulates you on your election to guide the work of this important Conference which is tasked with reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted by the international community five years ago. We view this Conference as providing a timely opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment to ending the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and allowing for more sustained attention to the ways in which to deal concretely with the problems posed by the continued illicit trade in these weapons.

Jamaica supports the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Mr. President

Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action and has been actively seeking to implement its provisions. Since 2001, we have been working on national legislation to strengthen implementation of the Programme of Action in particular, for those aspects which are not already in our domestic legislation. We have also ratified other international conventions including the United Nations Firearms Protocol.

Yet, like many others, we are concerned about the limited progress in stemming the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We acknowledge that the Programme of Action has led to some improvement in the situation, but at the same time, we believe there is need to address some areas which will make implementation of the Programme of Action more meaningful including through increased focus on ammunition. In undertaking our review of the Programme of Action, we will, as a necessity, take stock of where we are and what has been done. At the same time, there will undoubtedly be a need to examine how implementation can be made more relevant given that the circumstances surrounding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have been dynamic since the Programme of Action was adopted five years ago. This may need careful reflection on how to deal with all pertinent aspects related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In dealing with this problem, we need to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action as well as to consider an approach that fully takes into account the wider work and activities of the United Nations particularly as this relates to the development agenda.

Mr. President,

Jamaica, like many other countries, is seriously concerned about the continued illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the devastating effects and violent crime caused by the use of these weapons on the lives on the most vulnerable in our societies. The continued use and presence of these weapons also pose grave challenges to the development prospects of states and threatens our efforts for the timely attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

As a country which does not produce small arms and light weapons and which continues to be affected by the illicit trade in these weapons, implementation of the Programme of Action by all is of the utmost importance. The violent crime caused by the illicit use of small arms and light weapons not only hinders the attainment of our development priorities but also affects human development. If the level of crime and violence associated with the illicit use of these weapons is considerably reduced, this would have a significantly positive impact on economic growth and on the level of our economic development prospects.

Due to increased vigilance and commitment to the Programme of Action, Jamaica has initiated a comprehensive programme aimed at taking guns off the streets. Since 2001, we have recovered approximately over 30,000 illicit small arms and light weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

For these reasons, it is important to stress that all Member States must cooperate to promote those measures which will lead to the reduction in the illegal trade in arms and allow for the exchange of intelligence and information amongst law enforcement authorities which will lead to the apprehension of groups and individuals involved in the illicit trade.

In this context, we welcome the assistance provided to Jamaica at the bilateral and regional levels which has allowed for implementation of the Programme of Action to be made possible including through training provided for legal officers, policy makers, law enforcement officers and customs officials.

Jamaica also wishes to commend and thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiRec) for its support and continued work in the region, in assisting small island states with training programmes for law enforcement officers in Small Arms and Light Weapons through the holding of seminars and the promotion of programmes to improve public security in the Caribbean. We look forward to further support from regional offices in other areas in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

Jamaica welcomes and fully supports the work of the CIFTA-CICAD Group of Experts in preparing Model Legislation as it relates to the marking and tracing of weapons and it is hoped that States in the region will adopt some of the recommendations emanating from the Model Legislation, into their domestic legislation. Jamaica, as CARICOM, reiterates its call for the international community to adopt a legally binding instrument to allow states to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons.

There is also need for the international community to seriously examine the problem of illicit brokering as this poses one of the most serious risks for the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market. There is need for urgent change in this area to ensure greater transparency of the legal trade in small arms.

Mr. President,

There have been overwhelming costs to our national health sector due to the effects of the use of small arms. Not only does the treatment of victims divert resources from infrastructural projects, social amenities, educational projects and other health care needs, but the psychological effects of crime and violence on families and communities has attendant consequences on the development of many states, particularly small ones.

In addition, gun violence weakens the rule of law, threatens governance and prevents the delivery of social assistance to vulnerable groups. In this regard, we recognise and commend the work of the many non governmental organisations and civil society groups which have been striving to provide such assistance.

There is need to pay greater attention to the needs of our women and children, who have been the most affected by gun violence. At the same time, equal if not more attention needs to be paid to young men who in most cases are often both the victims and perpetrators of violence through the use of small arms. There is need in this connection to pursue the strengthening of national and regional programmes that address youth crime. More attention needs to be paid to the development of crime prevention programmes so as to reach out to this group as well as to provide more outlets for more positive and productive activity.

Mr. President,

In order to achieve more effective implementation of the Programme of Action, there should be continued commitment by States in providing resources and technical assistance to assist those countries affected by gun violence and the

illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition. This commitment should take the form of dedicated resources provided for such a purpose or in other forms. We are of the view that there is need for all countries to take their responsibilities seriously, for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade and manufacturing of weapons and ammunition.

In conclusion, we look forward to a meaningful result to the deliberations of this Review Conference to be conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. We have every confidence in you Mr. President, that you will be able to achieve this so as to fulfil the expectations held by many on the outcome of this Conference. We as an international community collectively owe it to the millions of persons whose lives have been devastated by the continued illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to ensure that our deliberations lead to concrete action which will significantly change their reality.

I thank you.