



UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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STATEMENT

by

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**ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY  
(CARICOM)**

in the

**Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent,  
Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in  
all its Aspects**

Agenda Item 6 (b) The establishment, where appropriate, of regional and sub regional mechanisms with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders, including international cooperation and assistance.

June 15, 2010

Please check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the fourteen member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In this regard, CARICOM aligns itself to the statement made by Indonesia on behalf the Non-Aligned Movement.

I wish to thank Ms. De Zoeten in her capacity as Friend of the Chair for her work on the “Draft Conceptual Working Paper on International Cooperation and Assistance.” Let me begin by saying that the CARICOM region has identified the issue of international cooperation and assistance as pivotal to the success of its efforts to implement the programme of action to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and would therefore seek to make some comments on this area.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to highlight that the geo-strategic importance of the region as a key transshipment and final destination point for small arms and light weapons necessitates a high level of regional, hemispheric and international cooperation to effectively address the issue.

In this regard, CARICOM welcomes the reference made in the Working Paper to identifying concrete ways to improve implementation of the Programme of Action on the issue of international cooperation and assistance. Specifically, CARICOM would wish to request greater information on the model project outline being developed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) to be utilised for states in outlining their assistance needs. Our active engagement with the international community, particularly in the multilateral context, and the resulting multiplicity of reporting requirements, is an issue of concern for small states with limited capacity and institutional support. CARICOM therefore welcomes the suggestion that the BMS 4 could endorse ODA assistance for states with the identification of international assistance needs and with matching national needs to available international resources.

Additionally, CARICOM believes that the issue of small arms and light weapons needs to be addressed at the regional and inter-regional level through frameworks and mechanisms geared to the promotion of cooperation and partnership, especially among those States where weapons originate, transit and serve as destination countries. For example, greater partnership can be developed to fight against this scourge by many African and Caribbean states, given the growing illicit guns and drugs trade between the West Coast of Africa and some parts of the Caribbean and American region. Such mechanisms would reflect the growing importance of South-South, North-South and Triangular cooperation, which is proving to be successful in addressing the achievement of other internationally agreed development goals.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM has benefitted from various regional efforts undertaken to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The ongoing work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) on

Firearms Destruction and Stockpile Management Assistance has proven particularly effective in this regard.

Additionally, the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network (RIBIN) is a major regional initiative that targets 'crime guns', through ballistic identification. The initiative aims to simultaneously share this information amongst law enforcement agencies in participating CARICOM Member States and, ultimately, with potential "source countries". It will contribute to higher detection and conviction rates. The vision for RIBIN is that, once fully incorporated, it will link the regional network with international systems, including *inter alia* the United States National Integrated Ballistics Identification Network (NIBIN), as well as, possibly, into e-trace operated by the United States.

Mr. Chairman,

At the Hemispheric Level assistance has also been rendered to Members of the Organization of American States (OAS) to implement the 1997 Inter-American Convention against the illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and the 1997 Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their parts and Components and Ammunition (Model Regulations) of the OAS.

Nevertheless, although these efforts have been made greater international assistance and cooperation is needed. The fragility and vulnerability of our economies has been exacerbated by the global economic and financial crisis and limits the availability of national resources to address the issue. The fortunes of the vast majority of our economies are indelibly linked to the need to continue successfully marketing the region as a safe tourism destination. In this regard, the presence of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons and the concomitant increase in criminal activity it occasions, is an issue that threatens our continued economic growth and development.

Mr. Chairman,

The nature of our needs at the level of international cooperation and assistance can therefore be considered as reaching a critical if not urgent level. The implications of a failure to comprehensively address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in our region transcend the peace and security agenda and are also inextricably linked to issues of social and economic development.

In conclusion, the Member States of CARICOM would like to express our willingness to work in a constructive manner to expand upon the areas identified in the working paper as measures that could be adopted in the area of international cooperation and assistance and we look forward to working with you toward the successful completion of this meeting.

I thank you.