



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

By

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

in the

**4th Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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**

on

**Agenda Item 6 (c): Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism
of the Programme of Action, and preparations for the
2011 Experts Group meeting and the 2012 Review Conference**



United Nations Headquarters
New York
June 16, 2010

Mr Chairman

Trinidad and Tobago recalls its statement delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on international cooperation and assistance and now wishes to make an intervention in its national capacity on agenda item 6(c): *Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action, and preparations for the 2011 Experts Group Meeting and the 2012 Review Conference.*

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has had debilitating effects on the society of Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it continues to place an inordinate burden on the resources of our law enforcement and judicial institutions in their efforts at combating this scourge.

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Mr. Chairman,

Trinidad and Tobago is not a manufacturer of firearms. The main source of illegal small arms and light weapons is attributed to weapons that have been smuggled into the country by sea or air. The cross-border dimension of these nefarious activities has been a constant challenge for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It is in this regard that Trinidad and Tobago has committed itself to the principles of international and regional cooperation and shared responsibility in confronting the phenomenon of small arms proliferation and related violence, as well as tackling associated issues such as organized crime and the illegal narcotics trade.

Mr. Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to reaffirm the value of multilateral action in implementing the programme of action on small arms and light weapons. We have demonstrated our commitment to this process in numerous ways:

At the national level:

- In keeping with our obligations under the Programme of Action we have submitted our annual reports.
- We have updated our legislation to provide for the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. Consequently, local authorities are well advanced in the process of developing and implementing a National Tracing Mechanism.
- We have established an Inter-Ministerial Guns Retrieval Committee to work towards the goal of supporting local law enforcement agencies. This Committee has established an electronic platform linking policy, strategy, operations and investigations, as a result of which, analysts can establish various patterns for case building by the police investigator.
- A mechanism was also established to facilitate the multi-directional sharing and exchange of information and intelligence between and among investigative/enforcement, scientific and other ~~officials~~ ^{agencies} supported by relevant technology.

Mr Chairman, these mechanisms would enable Trinidad and Tobago to be in a better position to:

- Track and trace firearms;
- Have greater control of legal firearms;
- Plan strategies and tactics to deal with illegal firearms;
- Adopt a preventative approach to firearm violence

Mr Chairman,

Trinidad and Tobago also recognizes the importance of bilateral initiatives as a means of implementing the Programme of Action. As a result, we have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the United States of America to facilitate the use of that country's E-Tracing mechanism. This instrument would allow local authorities to determine the possible origins of firearms used in local criminal activities and thereby assist investigators in determining how illegal guns are entering Trinidad and Tobago.

At the regional level, we continue to actively collaborate with the CARICOM Implementation Agency on Crime and Security (IMPACS) to place our national strategy in alignment with decisions taken at the level of the Council of National Security and Law Enforcement Ministers (CONSLE) of CARICOM. Trinidad and Tobago is also committed to participating in coordinated regional initiatives such as the Regional Integrated Ballistics Information Network, which is in the process of being established.

At the multilateral level, Trinidad and Tobago has either signed or ratified several international legal instruments which provide for action to address the proliferation small arms and light weapons. These include, the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, the United Nations Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the United Nations Instrument to Identify and trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Inter-American Convention

against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials and of course the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects.

Mr Chairman, in the absence of a legally binding international framework for regulating the trade in small arms, the Programme of Action has been of tangible assistance to the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago in their efforts to effectively combat this multifaceted problem.

For that reason, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes your discussion paper on “Strengthening of the follow-up mechanism on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and preparations for the 2011 Experts Group meeting and the 2012 Review Conference”.

Trinidad and Tobago agrees with the proposals contained in the working paper on strengthening the Programme of Action and bolstering its effectiveness. We support the proposals on streamlining and synthesizing reporting formats. We also welcome the new POA reporting template developed by the Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA). In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago supports the suggestion that a progress report be prepared on the status of implementation of the program of action. A truly strategic and effective approach to addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons necessitates that we clearly define our progress and address any shortcomings we may identify in our approach.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman I would like to reiterate that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is of tremendous importance to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. We will continue to cooperate with all relevant regional and international actors to support the process and mechanisms of the program of action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I thank you.

UNODC in Barbados