



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT 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

ON

Agenda Item 6(a) 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 trans-border customs cooperation and networks for information sharing among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies

New York, 14th June 2010

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me take this opportunity to express congratulations to you on your assumption to the Chair of this fourth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS4) to Consider the National, Regional and Global Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its Aspects. I also extend best wishes to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Jamaica associates itself with the statements made by St Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on this agenda item and the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Mr. Chairman,

As a small island developing State Jamaica continues to grapple with the harmful effects of the illicit trade in small arms which is endangering the well being of our people, and their socio-economic development.

Recent events in our nation's capital Kingston, has underscored a pertinent fact; that the easy access to small arms and light weapons promotes conflicts, exacerbates violence, increases the activities of organized crime and in many instances threatens to undermine the authority of the State as well as the socio-economic development of our society.

For many developing countries like Jamaica, one of the many and varied ways by which those engaged in the trafficking of illegal weapons have managed to exploit with impunity has been through relatively open and moderately secured borders.

The porous nature of our borders: land, air and sea, has unwittingly facilitated to a large extent, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on our shores, the Government continues to push for improved and increased mechanisms to mitigate the flow of illicit small arms through the country's ports of entry and coastline.

Our Ministry of National Security continues to work assiduously to develop a comprehensive policy agenda to support national security objectives. A plethora of solutions including legislative proposals is being explored by the Government at this time.

The transnational dimension of the problem cannot be overstated. The illicit traffic in small arms is part of the criminal networks that extend to countries in South America, North America and Europe. That is why the active collaboration assistance of our regional and international partners is crucial in our fight to develop and implement effective border control methods, practices and procedures.

The French, US and UK governments have contributed greatly to increased surveillance activity along the island's coastline. These efforts have bolstered our capabilities and capacity to respond efficiently and effectively when the need arises. Additionally, our partners including the government of Canada have provided support in areas such as: training for law enforcement agents; financial assistance to the Jamaica Defense Force Coast Guard and the provision of Ion-Scan Machines at our airports.

Cooperation with the United States has yielded a number of bilateral agreements, which include a Maritime Counter Narcotics Agreement, commonly referred to as the "Ship-rider" Agreement. Through this Agreement the Jamaica Defense Force Coast Guard and the US Coast Guard and Naval Vessels participate in joint activities in the region inclusive of Jamaica's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones, with the objective of intercepting "go fast boats" conveying drugs and guns from Central, North and South America.

Continued cooperation, at the bilateral and regional levels, in the form of capacity building and the supply of equipment, is critical to our ability to respond to the menace of small arms trafficking which threatens our socio-economic stability.

The nexus between narco- trafficking and the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons cannot be ignored and in this regard the Government remains committed to confronting the challenges at hand. Recent efforts include:

- The Transnational Crime and Narcotics Division has been restructured, upgraded, staffed and equipped to provide a formidable force in disrupting and reducing all trafficking related offences; and the
- Arrests of gang leaders as a means of tackling organized crime; and,
- The introduction in Parliament of new anti-crime legislation

At the regional level, Jamaica continues to participate meaningfully with our partners in the Caribbean Community in efforts to address the crime and security agenda through the implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE). Our law enforcement apparatus have also developed ongoing dialogue and collaboration with other countries in the Caribbean Basin who are similarly afflicted by the illicit trafficking in small arms and drugs.

Mr. Chairman,

The outcome of this Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the POA on SALW must encourage greater cooperation and collaboration among and between State institutions regionally and internationally, including: information exchange, strengthening of border controls, upgrading of equipment and the development of training programmes for officials.

I thank you.