Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. JOSEPH GODDARD
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BARBADOS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT 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

ON

AUGUST 28, 2012

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK

please check against delivery
Madam President,

I wish to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of this Second Review Conference. Barbados also wishes to express its appreciation for the transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness with which you have conducted the work of the Preparatory Committees and the informal consultations.

Barbados aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Guyana on behalf of the fourteen Member States of CARICOM.

Madam President,

The adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001 was a tangible reflection of the need for coordinated action at the multilateral level to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This illicit trade has been responsible for untold suffering globally. It undermines national and regional stability and threatens citizen security. The resulting insecurity and violence detract from our efforts to promote development and prosperity.

For Barbados and the other small developing countries, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes a threat to social and economic development. Experience has shown that this trade is inextricably linked to the trade in illicit drugs. Located, as we are, between the region of greatest production of cocaine and the country and areas of greatest consumption; and given the maritime intra-regional movement of other drugs, Barbados and other Caribbean territories have become a transshipment area for both illicit drugs and the firearms which
accompany them. Insufficient capacity for effective maritime monitoring and for securing maritime borders makes the island particularly vulnerable to the entry of illicit drugs and weapons. Border control is therefore of paramount importance and CARICOM has lobbied consistently to have due weight accorded to this matter in the agenda of the Programme of Action.

Madam President,
As CARICOM delegations have reiterated in numerous statements over the last several years, small arms and light weapons are the weapons of mass destruction of the Caribbean. Barbados and CARICOM have therefore been deeply, consistently, and actively engaged in the UN process to prevent, control and eliminate the illicit trade in these weapons. But the achievement of these goals extends beyond the framework of the Programme of Action. It also encompasses the content of the future Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). During the ATT negotiations, CARICOM countries joined a significant number of other delegations in insisting on the inclusion of SALWs and ammunition in the scope of items covered by the treaty. The failure of the ATT Conference to achieve its purpose was a grave disappointment. However, Barbados has the expectation that the resulting draft document will serve as a basis for resumed negotiations leading to the eventual adoption of a strong and legally binding ATT.

Madam President,
Significant progress has been achieved at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in advancing the aims of the Programme of Action. Among the successful initiatives at the national level is the establishment of a dedicated, specially
trained unit to combat crimes involving the use of firearms. Barbados also officially signed on to the web-based E-Trace programme of the US Department of Justice in January 2011. Participation in this programme has allowed for more expeditious trace requests and timely receipt of feedback in the form of printed reports and analysis of traces.

Coordination at the sub-regional level is essential in achieving concerted action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade and movement of small arms and light weapons. Advances at the sub-regional level include the formation of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, IMPACS, established to manage the region’s agenda on transnational organized crime, security and related matters. IMPACS is currently developing the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network to improve the capacity of CARICOM Member States to identify and trace guns and ammunition used to commit crimes, particularly in more than one territory. In July 2011 CARICOM Heads of State and Government reaffirmed the region’s commitment to preventing, combating and eradicating the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by adopting the CARICOM Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

At a broader regional level, Barbados signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Organisation of American States in June 2011 on the marking and tracing of firearms passing through the region, in keeping with ARTICLE VI of the Inter-American Convention Against Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms (CIFTA). As a follow-up, the country received marking equipment from the OAS and members of the Police Force were trained in the use of the equipment. This
equipment and training will assist in the implementation of enhanced gun control and licensing mechanisms, as stipulated by ARTICLE VI of CIFTA.

The Programme of Action stresses the need for international cooperation and assistance in order for its goals to be met. Barbados has benefitted greatly from cooperation with partners such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the European Union. We are also pursuing greater collaboration with the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LIREC).

Madam President,

Barbados considers this Second Review Conference to be of paramount importance. It provides an opportunity to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action and to explore concrete ways to strengthen that implementation at all levels. In this regard, Barbados thanks you for your draft outcome documents, which we consider an excellent basis for our discussions. Barbados looks forward to the upcoming discussions and to the adoption of a meaningful outcome document on September 7th.

I thank you.