STATEMENT BY

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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 ILLEGITIMATE TRADE IN
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

NEW YORK, 28TH AUGUST 2012

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Madame President,

Jamaica fully aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the distinguished delegate from Guyana on behalf of the CARICOM member states. Jamaica also aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non- Aligned Movement.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey, on behalf of my delegation, congratulations on your election as President of this Second Review Conference. I wish to extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election as well. I give you my assurance that the Jamaican delegation stands ready to contribute in a most positive way to ensure a meaningful and substantive outcome to our deliberations.

Madame President,

The open borders in the Caribbean make us an easy conduit for transhipment between the major sources and destinations of SALWs and ammunition. The attendant crime and violence constitute a major threat for national development because they create instability and force us to divert scarce resources to tackle this scourge. The strengthening of cross border controls is therefore an issue of high priority to Jamaica and the Caribbean.

Jamaica believes that national implementation is crucial to the complete and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. This position is underpinned by Jamaica’s National Development Plan: “Vision 2030” which outlines innovative strategies that address the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In this connection, Jamaica has undertaken a number of measures at the national level to strengthen the framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition. In so doing, we have made noteworthy progress in the reduction of incidents of crime and other acts of armed violence committed using these weapons.

In terms of governance, among the recent measures undertaken are: the drafting of a national small arms policy; the establishment of a Small Arms Committee; and the re-drafting of existing legislation. Additionally, with the assistance of UNLIREC, and other partners, Jamaica has also improved its weapons stockpile management practices.

Madame President

Jamaica has been experiencing tremendous success in the use of new technologies to keep track of firearms and their usage. Jamaica’s Firearm Licensing Authority is now able to capture the unique ballistic signatures of new firearms for which licenses have been granted, and the use of this information by the police is making a valuable contribution to crime fighting. Further, there is a newly instituted re-certification process for holders of firearm licenses issued before 2006, which allows the Authority to capture the ballistic signatures of those weapons as well.
Madame President,

As Jamaica continues to strengthen our national efforts, there are areas of focus that stand to benefit greatly from cooperation and further assistance. These areas include but are not limited to:

1. Capacity building in the area of border security, including maritime security to prevent illicit small arms and ammunition from entering the country.
2. Strengthening national capacities to prevent diversion of legal small arms and ammunition from government stockpiles as well as the licit trade into the illicit markets.
3. Training in the areas of criminal justice; and
4. Capacity building to facilitate improvements in our legislative drafting capacity.

As a tangible outcome of the current review process, and in addition to the concrete measure previously outlined in the CARICOM statement, we would welcome the establishment of a formal and structured framework that would facilitate adequate technology transfers concerning:

   1. The effective functioning of national coordinating agencies for the implementation of the various provisions of the PoA;
   2. The establishing of adequate national controls with respect to the activities of brokers and brokering legislation; and
   3. Capacity building mechanisms.

It is with the foregoing in mind that I commend the work of the Regional Disarmament Centres that provide capacity building mechanism for countries across the world including the Caribbean. We call on those actors in a position to do so, to continue to provide financial and technical support to enable these centres to increase their assistance to countries in the respective regions in the further implementation of the PoA.

Madam President,

Jamaica, in addition to being fully committed to implementing, as far as possible, all necessary action at the national level, actively supports implementation at the regional, hemispheric and global levels to fully combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We maintain that concerted action is the only method by which sustainable progress can and will be made. We cannot as individual countries hope to succeed alone. The very nature of transnational organized crime requires cross-border collaboration at all levels to combat the illegal trade and tackle with equal vigour the supply, transit and demand sides of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

In closing Madame President, allow me to reiterate Jamaica’s commitment to working with you and your team as we move towards a successful conclusion of this Review Conference.

I thank you.