

**Intervention by Mr. Mohammed Iqbal Degia, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of
Barbados to the United Nations
on behalf of CARICOM on the theme of
International Co-operation, Assistance and National Capacity Building
BMS3,
July 14, 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

At the outset CARICOM wishes to congratulate you and your bureau on your election and we assure you of our co-operation to ensure a successful outcome to this third BMS. We also wish to thank you for the documents which have been presented to us.

M. Chairman,

- The nature of the problem presented by the illicit trade in SALW renders this BMS of extreme importance to the region and a successful outcome at the end of this week is critical to us.
- In any discussion of small arms and light weapons and indeed of disarmament in general, CARICOM's primary assertion is that CARICOM countries are not arms producers, do not import arms on a large scale or re-export them. Yet still, the region finds itself afflicted by the scourge of the illicit trade in SALW, which in many respects is largely due to external factors and its unique geographical position.
- The serious challenges and threats posed by the clear linkage between the illicit trade in SALW and the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and related transnational organised crime requires concerted action and a multi-dimensional approach at all levels.
- Issues such as brokering, stockpile management, marking and tracing, binding arms transfer controls, ammunition, possession by non-state actors and civilians are all inextricably linked and must be addressed as part of an holistic approach to the fight against SALW.
- CARICOM agrees that national responsibility and national/ regional implementation of the POA is important in any effort to address the illicit trade and has devoted significant effort and resources towards enhancing national and regional security through various processes. Indeed, CARICOM Heads of Government in February 2007 made a decision to recognise security as the fourth pillar of the Community and have sought to widen the regional integration movement beyond an economic level to encompass a comprehensive strengthening of regional security. However, the fact that the problem is largely an externally imposed one in the Caribbean and that we live in an interdependent world where the illicit trade in SALW pays no respect to borders means that

action at the international level and enhanced international co-operation and assistance is crucial. The international community and particularly those states that engage in the trade of arms are morally and ethically obliged to play a much larger role than currently exists.

- International co-operation and assistance must be enhanced particularly by those manufacturing states and should be wide-ranging in scope based on the specific needs of countries and regions. The provision of international co-operation and assistance must not be subject to any conditionalities.
- CARICOM because of its regional outlook and collective manner of tackling problems affecting the region provides a conducive and enabling environment for the provision of technical assistance and co-operation where much of the assistance can be done on a regional basis as opposed to a large number of separate projects, thereby maximising resources.
- CARICOM has felt that despite the serious threat to our security, stability and development posed by the illicit trade in SALW, drug trafficking and transnational organised crime, our situation is sometimes marginalised and our voices ignored. The closing of the UNODC regional office in Barbados which served a total of 29 States and territories in the Caribbean is a primary example of this and CARICOM calls for the urgent reopening of the office, a move which will serve to demonstrate the commitment of the UN system and the international community to assisting the region in its efforts to combat the illicit trade in SALW, drug trafficking and transnational organised crime.

Finally, with respect to the draft outcome document, we are ready to discuss specific language and contribute to the meeting's arrival at a consensus text.