



CARICOM

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Raymond O. Wolfe
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to the United Nations

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
(CARICOM)

in 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**

Agenda Item 7 Consideration of the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to
Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

June 17, 2010

Please check against delivery

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Mr. Chairman,

I speak on behalf of the 14 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Firstly; I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. William Kullman, in his capacity as Friend of the Chair for the preparation of the "Working Non Paper on International Tracing Instrument".

The non-paper identifies the establishment of the necessary infrastructure for a national or regional tracing system as the sine qua non for the implementation of the international Tracing Instrument. The paper also indicates that due to the tremendous number and variety of firearms, a successful tracing system requires a fair degree of expertise in firearms identification. For a developing region with human and financial resource constraints, international cooperation is vital for the development of this infrastructure and for the acquisition of this expertise.

Mr. Chairman,

As a region where pockets of significant gun related violence exist, CARICOM attaches significant importance to all efforts aimed at regulating the manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons. Of critical importance to this process is marking and tracing; its value cannot be overstated nor should its worth be downplayed in any effort geared towards the effective regulation of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

CARICOM has made repeated calls Mr. Chairman, for the establishment of a broad global approach to marking and tracing, such an approach we believe, would help in creating the establishment of internationally accepted norms and standards, that would effectively

advance the objective of the effective regulation of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM Member States do not manufacture arms nor are we large scale importers of weapons. It is undeniable that the easy access to illegal small arms and ammunitions directly contributes to the rising levels of gun-related violence. The net result being an unwarranted burden on our social and economic systems, forcing our governments to divert already meager and in some instances scarce resources, to address its debilitating effects on our societies and in some cases has derailed and in others, is threatening the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, as several programmes have had to be deferred or shelved altogether.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM recognizes the tremendous role that the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing can play towards addressing this situation and is convinced that its possible effectiveness is grossly retarded by the fact that it is not legally binding. It is therefore CARICOM's view that efforts should be geared towards the development and adoption of a legally binding instrument on marking and tracing for small arms and light weapons. We firmly believe that all governments, particularly those of manufacturing States, have not only a moral responsibility but a legal obligation to ensure that weapons where legally acquired are not diverted to the illicit trade and for that reason, proper checks and balances must underpin any tracing system which by design should incorporate a network of laws, regulations, and an accurate and secure keeping of records.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is endeavoring to fulfill its obligations under the POA including the ITI. In this connection, Members States have taken significant steps. Several members of CARICOM have enacted regulations which put all firearms and related issues under one regulatory framework. At the same time some CARICOM States have established a central authority with responsibility to maintain links with their overseas law enforcement counterparts to trace the origin of weapons entering legally or illegally. In many instances Mr. Chairman, the Ministries of National Security have oversight responsibility for ensuring compliance with the regulations and for monitoring the activities of the licence issuing authority, as well as acting as the main policy direction authority on all issues related to small arms and light weapons.

The Customs departments of several Members of CARICOM maintain records of serial numbers of all small arms entering their territories at the ports of entry. Government officials, law enforcement officers, brokers and private individuals must obtain the requisite permit prior to being allowed to have such weapons. The issuing authority for firearms licence in many CARICOM States retains the serial numbers of all imported weapons and details of each owner. Similarly, the armoury divisions of both the police and military keep their own lists of serial numbers of all weapons in the possession of their respective officers.

On the bilateral front, CARICOM is currently engaged with the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) on the exchange of information on firearms recovered at scenes of crime. This is facilitated under a December 2007 joint CARICOM-US Initiative on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons and Ammunition. While multilaterally, the recent adoption within the OAS of the CICAD Model Regulation for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, demonstrates the vital role that regional organizations can play in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. And we are all aware, Mr. Chairman, of the crucial role the UN has played in assisting to tackle this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

As noted earlier, a major challenge in the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument lies in the fact that it is not legally binding. Secondly, financial constraints have held back the development and realization of programmes which could positively impact on its implementation.

To conclude Mr. Chairman, CARICOM looks forward to continued cooperation with our partners on this critical issue, particularly in the sharing of best practices and capacity building.

I thank you.

