



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

To The

**SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO
CONSIDER 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**

(New York, 12th July, 2005)

(Final Version)

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica congratulates you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of this Second Biennial meeting. We view this meeting as important in preparation for the review Conference to be held next year on the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action.

It has been four years since the adoption of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects. Yet, the illicit trade in small arms continues to cause death and devastation in large numbers. When the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is coupled with the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, the resulting combination is a deadly one for the national security of states. The increased production, distribution and proliferation of these weapons and ammunition also endanger development prospects.

Increased proliferation in small arms and light weapons and the linkages to transnational organized crime and the trade in arms and drugs is a situation faced by many countries in the developing world. Jamaica is all too familiar with this situation evidenced by high rates of criminal activity and violent crime.

The entry of small arms and light weapons into Jamaica continues to be a source of concern as Jamaica neither produces nor manufactures these weapons. The smuggling of arms is not just restricted to the actual weapons themselves but also includes parts of weapons and ammunition.

It has been identified that these weapons have been entering Jamaica from the main manufacturers of these weapons in our region. In keeping with the UN Programme of Action, Jamaica has been undertaking various efforts at the national level in order to deal with this problem. Such action includes the identification of the source of the weapons, the strengthening of our borders especially through increased security at our ports, and, the amendment of relevant legislation governing the importation of arms and ammunition.

In the area of port security, Jamaica has obtained International Shipping and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) certification for most of its ports and has installed machinery to examine both incoming and outgoing cargo containers to ensure that these are not contaminated with arms, ammunition or illicit drugs.

Jamaica has been applying the OAS Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Under these guidelines all shipping companies and agents must obtain prior permission from the Ministry of National Security for the import, export, transit or transshipment of all arms and ammunition and dangerous cargo coming via the island's ports. In fact, Jamaica was selected last year for the installation of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Administration System (SALSA) software, to monitor the movement of arms and ammunition throughout the Caribbean region.

The Police Force and Coast Guard have also stepped up patrols of the territorial waters along our coastline in an attempt to apprehend arms and drug traffickers.

The Government of Jamaica has also been undertaking a review of the legislation governing arms and ammunition. The legislation which is to be reviewed and amended includes the Firearms Act and the Gunpowder and Explosives Act. The areas of review are expected to include the regulations governing the importation of arms and ammunition, the means to address the smuggling and illicit import of small arms, increased sentences and penalties regarding the illicit import, export and distribution of arms and ammunition, and a tightening of the restrictions on the importation of dangerous goods and cargo into the island. Jamaica also ratified in September 2003 the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as well as its three Protocols.

At the sub-regional level, Jamaica is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Task Force on Crime and Security which has made recommendations to CARICOM Heads of Government on the matter of illegal small arms and light weapons and which has been seeking to improve cooperation within the region on issues relating to crime. Activities in this area include the exchange of information in order to improve effectiveness in preventing and combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Jamaica is also a signatory to the Organisation of American States (OAS) Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Material, which addresses the control of illicit trade in firearms at the regional level.

While Jamaica has been undertaking action at the national and regional levels, constraints are still faced in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. These include, in large part, a limited capacity to deal

with the inflow of these weapons into the country. We are appreciative of the technical and other assistance provided at the bilateral level to deal with the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We would also welcome increased international aid and assistance to help reduce the inflow of these weapons and in bolstering the capacity of the country to deal with this problem.

We consider however that any real action in dealing with this phenomenon lies in addressing the real root of the problem, namely the curtailment of the sources of these weapons.

For tangible results to be achieved there needs to be more robust action at the international level to bolster national and regional activity in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action. It is in this context that Jamaica expresses its grave disappointment that the Open Ended Working Group established to draft an instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons, was not able to agree that this instrument be legally binding.

We therefore call on the international community to elaborate a legally binding instrument to assist States in identifying the illicit weapons which enter their territories.

We also emphasize the need for countries, especially those in our geographical region, to create tighter controls along their borders to prevent the outflow of guns.

At the regional level, we support efforts to create, with the assistance of the United Nations and other international partners, a sub-regional capacity to assist States in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action and other relevant regional instruments. We are also in support of the strengthening of existing sub regional and regional centres, including the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), in order to improve the capacity of states in the CARICOM region to deal with the problems posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, allow me to add that Jamaica has just submitted to the Department for Disarmament Affairs its national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Thank you.

The proliferation of illicit Small Arms and Light weapons and the linkages to transnational organized crime and the trade in narcotic drugs has spawned a culture of violence and crime.

The incidence of gun violence especially in inner city communities affects many residents especially children. Children have been forced to leave their homes, have had their schooling disrupted and have been killed and injured due to such violence. Of concern has been the recent tendency for some children to live what they learn by seeking to possess guns or, being lured by empty promises that money is better than education, have been recruited into gangs.

The absence of positive role models especially males in the communities, perpetuates a culture of gun violence and has an added detrimental effect on the society.

The Government of Jamaica has, in spite of various challenges, been actively undertaking its obligations under the Programme of Action to curtail the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons into the island. The Government has also been seeking to address the problems faced by the most vulnerable in the society due to gun violence. ~~One such example is the~~ Partnerships ^{have been forced} with the private sector and civil society to address these issues as well as the institution of various programmes to promote peace. One ^{such} ~~such~~ is the

Programme for Peace and Love in Schools (PALS) which is used to foster a culture of peace among children.

The Government has also been ^{actively} working in partnership with UNICEF to address the problems faced by children. ^{an} ~~One~~ ^{of the} ~~has been~~ ^{is} the project which has been implemented with the assistance of UNICEF to address the ways in which children are dealing with traumatic situations, including gun violence.

At the community level, work is based on an approach which involves the entire community to train persons to deal with gun violence and its associated effects. Counselors are deployed to the communities to meet and treat with affected citizens. This programme focuses on those most vulnerable to violence in particular children. This programme involves two levels, - a professionally trained counselor and a person selected from the community itself who is familiar with community residents. This approach has been found to be the most effective.

The Government also continues to address all the growing threats to children affected by violence and other situations which increase their vulnerability through its Child Development Agency.