



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. STAFFORD NEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

TO THE

**OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AN
INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE IDENTIFICATION
AND TRACING OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

NEW YORK, 16 JUNE 2004

Jamaica joins with previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this working group. Jamaica considers the convening of this working group and the achievement of a concrete result to be of great importance in view of the continuing dangers created by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

The proliferation of these weapons continues to undermine peace and stability, and pose immense challenges to development strategies for the elimination of poverty. The illicit trade in these weapons has contributed to the deaths of millions of persons and is helping to destroy many societies. These weapons represent the principal means and chosen instruments of increasing criminality, subversion and terrorism. We have seen increased global attention to WMDs including recent action by the Security Council under Chapter VII. But for many of us it is the light weapons and small arms which constitute the greatest immediate danger.

Mr. Chairman,

This open-ended working group affords an important opportunity for all members of the international community including those countries which are particularly affected by the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons to discuss in an open, transparent and serious manner the elaboration of the international instrument for the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons. But we should move quickly beyond speeches to achieve a concrete result.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of The Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community but would wish to add a few points of emphasis from a national perspective on matters pertaining to marking, tracing and cooperation in tracing.

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica does not manufacture small arms and light weapons. Regulation of the small arms and light weapons that enter or transit the island is based on the Organization of American States (OAS) Model Regulations on the import, export and transit of arms ammunition and explosives. Given Jamaica's own experience with the illicit and illegal importation of arms and ammunition and the resulting impact on social stability, we consider that an

international instrument would be beneficial to our national authorities in stemming the illegal flow of arms into Jamaica. We are of the view that this instrument should be multilaterally negotiated and legally-binding as this provides the best means to deal with matters of identifying and tracing small arms and light weapons. Such an instrument should complement existing obligations under other relevant international instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and its links to transnational organized crime poses difficulties of immense proportions for public order and public safety for many countries including my own. Increasingly, the sophisticated weaponry and the ease of access to these weapons have placed our security forces at a considerable disadvantage in apprehending criminals and combating gun related crimes. While we recognize that some efforts are being made in the area of customs cooperation and the exchange of intelligence information to control the illicit trade of small arms, we are of the view that such procedures need to be standardized and made obligatory.

An essential component of the proposed international instrument should be agreement on international cooperation. In this regard, while recognizing the legal and security interests of states, the instrument should allow for operational cooperation which will facilitate the exchange of information among national systems.

Jamaica believes that any instrument on marking should include a mechanism to ensure that there is uniform marking and record keeping of every small arm and light weapon which is produced including those for use by armed forces. In this regard, each firearm should bear a unique and permanent mark which is easily readable and identifiable. In order for there to be reciprocal recognition of the national systems for marking and record keeping, there may be need for technical assistance and training for those countries desirous of such assistance.

Accurate and comprehensive records should be kept for all marked small arms and light weapons. These records should either be kept for the life of the weapon or for an agreed minimum period.

Mr. Chairman,

We agree with the observation contained in your paper, that to facilitate cooperation in tracing there should be some consideration of the best mechanism to ensure such cooperation. While we would prefer the establishment of a new dedicated institution, this may not necessarily need to be the case but could possibly be through an existing institution. As pointed out by you Mr. Chairman, the criteria for such arrangements would have to ensure minimum duplication, maximum efficiency and be complementary to other arrangements.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to conclude by acknowledging the important work done by the group of Governmental Experts under the leadership of Ambassador Sood of India on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to deal with the identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. This report has provided us with a useful basis in which to translate political will into concrete action. Let me also assure you of the cooperation of my delegation as we seek to advance our work on the elaboration of the international instrument.

Thank you.