



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

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**AT THE**

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS  
AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

**New York, July 10, 2001**

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Mr. President,

Jamaica is pleased to see you, Ambassador Donowaki, presiding over this segment of our meeting, because of your personal involvement and interest in this issue. Jamaica is also gratified to see His Excellency Camilo Reyes, a distinguished representative of a member state of our region, guiding the deliberations of this Conference. We are confident that his diplomatic skill and sensitivity to the issues will assure successful outcome of this conference, critical as it is to peace and development for the peoples of the world.

Jamaica pays tribute to those states which contributed significantly to the realisation of this meeting and particularly to the leadership of His Excellency, Carlos Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Mozambique, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, who is especially deserving of our appreciation. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary General and the Department of Disarmament Affairs for vigorously highlighting the increasing urgency of the need to address this issue, and for supporting the important research of the Group of Governmental Experts, in which Jamaica was privileged to participate.

Mr. President,

The uncontrolled spread and use of small arms and light weapons have become an increased threat to personal security; fraying the social fabric of our communities; undermining good governance; contributing to the violation of human rights and the erosion of social justice. The escalation in the level of violence that has accompanied the increase in illegal trafficking in these weapons now poses a formidable challenge to the economic and social development of developing countries. While the countries of the African continent stand out as dramatic illustrations of the peril we face, there is no doubt that the proliferation of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons has international dimensions, with unique manifestations in different regions of the world.

In the Caribbean, this illicit arms trade is underpinned and fuelled by the illegal drug trade, thus making guns and drugs a double-barrelled force of evil and mayhem in our societies. Criminal organisations involved in drug trafficking utilize small arms and light weapons effectively to conduct their illegal activities, and often diversify into other forms of criminal activity, including money laundering, arms trafficking and narco-terrorism. It is in this regard, and in keeping with its international obligations, that Jamaica has expanded its money laundering predicate offence to include, among others, arms trafficking.

In my own country, crimes of violence often associated with drug trafficking result in murders committed with the use of illegal weapons. Among the illegal weapons recovered through law enforcement activities are an increasing number of assault rifles, particularly AK47s. We have also been told that, with over three hundred manufacturers of these weapons in seventy countries, the global arsenal, legal and illegal, is increasing exponentially each year.

For us in the Caribbean, we are especially wary of the spread of military arms such as fully automatic rocket launchers and missiles which are increasingly the tools of trade of criminal gangs, terrorist groups and drug trafficking organizations. We believe that the time has come for the international community, particularly states which are manufacturers of arms, to consider the implementation of measures that would limit the production of such weapons to levels that meet the need for defence and national security, and that would limit civilian access to weapons manufactured for military use.

Mr. President,

Jamaica firmly supports the urgent need for domestic and international regulation that would help to stem the leakage of trade in legal weapons to illegal markets. We believe that such effort should be a central part of any strategy to control illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In this regard, improved monitoring and regulation of re-sale and secondary markets is important, for many guns bought legally are re-sold illegally.

We strongly support the marking of firearms, improved regulation of firearms dealers, the strengthening of national record-keeping requirements and the application of more rigorous standards for arms brokers and other traders of small arms and light weapons. It is our hope that the Programme of Action that we adopt at this meeting will address these issues meaningfully.

In this regard, we welcome the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Explosives and Other Related Materials, and the recently concluded Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime on the Illicit Manufacture and Traffic in Firearms, which seek to address this problem. The latter instrument requires the marking of firearms at the time of manufacture for identification purposes; the keeping of records to permit tracing, the exchange of information as well as strict import and export authorization regimes. These are most welcome.

We believe that there should be agreed minimum standards for marking, record-keeping and cooperation in tracing, and measures to ensure the adequate marking of existing stocks of small arms, whether in the possession of government military departments or of private individuals. Inadequately marked stocks should be properly marked or destroyed.

This meeting offers an important opportunity for the mobilization of international support to assist developing countries in strengthening national capacity to effectively control the illicit trade in small arms. For small island states like Jamaica, assistance with the effective monitoring of our coastline and training programmes to adequately equip law enforcement and customs officials in the interdiction, collection and analysis of illegal weapons, is particularly important.

Mr. President,

We are aware that the issues we confront at this conference will require accommodation of diverse interests, and will demand unequivocal investment of political will and cooperation between producer and user countries. But we must make the accommodations and the investment of will if we are to arrive at the end of this meeting with a Programme of Action that offers hope to our societies and peoples whose future is compromised by the threat and the reality of this deadly trade. For my own part, I offer you the fullest cooperation and support of the Jamaican delegation.

Thank you.