



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

IN

**THE FIRST COMMITTEE
ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS**

**SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chair,

Jamaica aligns itself with the statement made by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of CARICOM. We accord great importance to the consideration by the First Committee of this agenda item. For decades, small island developing states like ours have sought to highlight the significant impact which the transfer, accumulation and misuse of illicit small arms and light weapons have on our societies:

- It tears at our social fabric by disrupting family structures—while instilling fear and mistrust;
- It robs us of valuable human resources and diminish our productive capacities, through the wanton destruction of lives;
- It threatens our economic viability and negatively impact our socio-economic development; by diverting
- much needed resources from other developmental priorities.

In short, the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons shatters peaceful societies by undermining security and the rule of law.

The prevalence of illicit guns and ammunition feeds the monster of crime and violence that is rampant within various parts of our island and throughout the Caribbean region.

Countries like ours are situated in a strategic geographical zone that is exploited by macro traffickers who conduct a lucrative *guns for drugs* trade. This prime location has facilitated and enabled the exchange of weapons across our porous borders and has enriched an ever increasing network of organised criminal gangs.

Jamaica, therefore, has a keen and vested interest in efforts aimed at regulating international transfers of illicit conventional arms and the prevention of their misuse, diversion and trafficking.

Mr. Chair,

We have made a deliberate and conscious effort to work with partners at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, to effectively respond to the challenges posed by conventional weapons, and we are encouraged by the action that has been taken to date. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the successful convening of the Second Conference of States Parties in August 2016, represents an example of one such significant achievement. We are pleased with the progress being made to ensure that the institutional and other arrangements are in place for the effective implementation of the ATT. We urge member states that have not already done so

to become a party to the Treaty. In furtherance of our commitment to implementing the ATT, Jamaica intends to:

- draft a regulatory framework to govern the movement of conventional arms within our territory; and
- undertake further amendments to our Firearms Act to improve transparency and efficiency, in keeping with our regulatory framework for the controlled use of small arms among private citizens;
- we will also acquire equipment/tools to assist in the detection, interception and seizure of conventional arms at Jamaica's ports of entry.

We are pleased that BMS6 was successfully concluded this June and are honoured and privileged to have spearheaded the process and the deliberations that subsequently ensued. The adoption of a consensus based outcome document highlights the international community's renewed commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in these weapons.

Mr. Chair,

We support the continued mainstreaming of gender into our consideration of this agenda item. The evidence is clear regarding the devastating impact that the use of conventional weapons have had on women and children within conflict settings. The prospects for meaningful progress to be made on conflict prevention, peace building and peacekeeping will not be realized if this gender dimension is not placed at the centre of our efforts.

Similarly, we must continue to work assiduously towards mainstreaming the prevention and combatting of trafficking in conventional arms into our broader development efforts. Jamaica, through its Vision 2030 National Development Plan, as well as through our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has always seen merit in such an interdependent approach and hopes that the requisite level of cooperation and assistance will also be in place to complement efforts in this regard.

I conclude by recalling and recognizing the sterling contribution made by the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the Latin America and Caribbean (UNLIREC) in Peru, in support of our efforts to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The level of support and cooperation that has been provided is invaluable. Just recently, for example, Jamaica, in partnership with the Centre, hosted a special workshop on forensics ballistic collaborative competency testing in which participants from all over the Caribbean were able to participate. We, along with fellow CARICOM countries, have also been the beneficiaries of capacity building assistance in maritime security, airport security screening, firearms stockpile management and destruction, as well as in training for security and justice

sector personnel. We are deeply appreciative of this consistent support, which has been sustained for the past 30 years.

One of the most enduring features of the nature of the engagement which Member States have with the Regional Centres is that they have remained faithful to their mandate of responding to requests that are country and demand driven. This has engendered a partnership based on mutual respect. We are committed to maintaining and furthering our collaboration with UNLIREC in the years to come.

I thank you.