



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

REMARKS BY

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AT

**LAUNCHING THE UN'S TRUST FACILITY ON ARMED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND
SMALL ARMS CONTROL: *SALIENT* (THE SAVING-LIVES ENTITY)**

**DISARMAMENT THAT SAVES LIVES
SUPPORTING COUNTRY-LEVEL SMALL ARMS CONTROL AND VIOLENCE
REDUCTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

**24th OCTOBER 2019
NEW YORK**

1. SALUTATIONS

2. CONTEXT – WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- Jamaica is pleased to have been invited to participate in this special launch event for SALIENT. We are appreciative of the very personal interest that the Secretary-General has taken in advancing disarmament in general and addressing challenges associated with conventional weapons in particular. As we reiterated yesterday in our national statement in the thematic consideration of conventional weapons, we have a particular interest in arresting the illicit proliferation of small arms, given its devastating impact on our society, which has manifested itself in a variety of ways.
- The most obvious is with respect to citizen security. Although Jamaica is not at war, is not the victim of armed conflict and is not under the pangs of civil war, the high levels of armed violence has created heightened levels of concern and understandable levels of fear across the society. We have a homicide rate of 47 per 100,000 of the population of approximately 2.8 million in which firearms play a dominant role.
- There are also other social implications arising from the levels of deaths associated with this armed violence, fuelled in the majority of instances by firearms. There is the obvious loss of human resources and reduced productivity levels, disruption in family life, with more young males as perpetrators and victims of gun crimes, and more female headed households. Our over 200 gangs, buttressed by organized crime networks and hubs, are transnational in their scope and spheres of operation. Against this background, social intervention and community based programmes become especially critical but are often devoid of sustained, adequate resources for meaningful, long-term impact for us to respond to the economic incentives that lure persons into criminal activity and would allow us to break the culture of violence at the individual, family, community and broader society levels.
- There also related economic consequences. A 2007 UNODC report suggests that Jamaica could boost economic growth per capita by 5.4 per cent per year. There are also the indirect costs of crime, which includes the higher cost of doing business, weaker investor confidence and the emigration of the educated middle class. Much needed resources also have to be diverted towards other endeavours. For example, a 2006 WHO study indicates that the cost of direct medical care for violence-related injuries at public hospitals island-wide was USD 29 million or approximately 12 per cent of Jamaica's total health budget. To this end, it is worth noting that productivity losses due to violence-related injuries are estimated to account for approximately USD 398 million, equivalent to 4 per cent of Jamaica's GDP.
- So what accounts for this malaise? A combination of factors, not least of which is our porous borders – we have 145 unofficial ports and a maritime space 25 times larger than our land mass.

3. WHAT NOW?

- Responses seek to take account of and frontally address the problem. Several policy and legislative measures have been undertaken, including going after the proceeds of crime, strengthening institutional arrangements to tackle organised crime and corruption, and strengthening our national Firearm Licensing Authority. But national action is not enough. Consequently, and since the challenges are the same, we have been working with fellow CARICOM countries, including through our regional mechanism known as the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS). We also have specific bilateral programmes, are parties to several regional and international treaties and agreements, and have benefitted from support provided by the UN system.

4. HOW CAN SALIENT HELP?

- SALIENT represents another important opportunity for cooperation with the Organisation. Its programmatic approach is encouraging, most notably its emphasis on the link between disarmament and development, as well as the need for a multi-sectoral solution. Why is this critical? Because it has a direct bearing on the attainment of the SDGs at the national level. For a country like Jamaica, whose own National Development Plan is over 90 per cent aligned with the SDGs, this is a major issue. We are looking for long-term, cross-sectoral and impactful support to combat the problem of armed violence threats emanating from and dominating the region, through both a demand and supply approach that addresses the culture of violence to which I spoke earlier, as well as responds to diversion not only in terms of stockpile management, but also enables us to better tackle the porosity of our border and to also stem flows through legal channels. Technical assistance and cooperation are vital elements.
- We wish to express appreciation to the Governments of Japan and New Zealand for their contribution to the Fund and would like to encourage others to join this initiative. We hope to benefit to break our vicious cycle of crime and violence to what our Minister of National Security describes as a “*Virtuous Cycle of Peace and Prosperity.*”
- I thank you.