



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

STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

DURING THE GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

AT THE

**THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE
IN 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**

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Mr. President,

Jamaica is pleased to see you presiding over the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in 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. I wish to assure you of our support as together we work to ensure that the Conference is a success. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. President,

Jamaica's approach to the Review Conference is informed by the realities it faces at the national level, where crime and violence remain pervasive. We continue to witness a 23 per cent increase annually in homicide rates, the majority of which are committed through the use of the firearm. In fact, of the over 1,600 murders committed in 2017, approximately 85 per cent or more than 1,300 were perpetrated by the use of the gun. Crime of this proportion is usually reserved for countries with high levels of armed conflict. However, Jamaica is not a country at war - it is the victim of high levels of armed violence. Indeed, studies suggest that our economic growth could be advanced by as much as 5.5 per cent per capita per year if our homicide rates are reduced. This would significantly advance the implementation of our national development objectives and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16.4.

Against this background, we take seriously efforts aimed at comprehensively and robustly addressing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Our objectives are motivated by a keen desire to ensure that societies like ours are able to find the requisite support at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to address this scourge. With this in mind, we have submitted two (2) working papers to the Conference in support of our strong commitment to this process.

The first paper speaks to the recent development of a Standards Manual for the Ministry of National Security for Firearms Marking Information Management System and Marking Operations Oversight. It represents the Government's latest attempt to use an electronic database to merge marking with recordkeeping. By so doing, greater emphasis is placed on making marking a proactive, prevention tool for accountability, as opposed to a reactive tool for law enforcement. We believe this represents a best practice that could be emulated by other Member States.

The second paper makes the case for a comprehensive review of the PoA and the ITI, citing many of the challenges that beset us as a society, and consequently, the need for the Review Conference to be ambitious in its outlook and prescriptions.

Mr. President,

The PoA and the ITI remain invaluable tools for the international community. They have served us well and stand as important complements to the evolving disarmament landscape. For this reason, we have to ensure that there are synergies between the PoA and other instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This synergy can be facilitated without prejudice to whether one is a State Party to the ATT since the focus would be on the substantive correlation between the Treaty and the PoA. Synergies should also extend to the reporting templates. For delegations like ours where capacity constraints are real, reporting synergies lend themselves to greater opportunities for compliance in fulfilling reporting obligations.

Mr. President,

The challenges posed by the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in today's everchanging security environment, make it imperative that our collective attention also be drawn to new and emerging technologies, and the potential for such technologies to be misused and perpetrated by dubious non-state actors.

Equally important will be the need, as an international community, to address the gender dimension of small arms and light weapons, mindful of the role that women can play in addressing situations of armed violence and armed conflict.

Mr. President,

We must confront illicit proliferation in all its aspects, inclusive of the issue of ammunition. It is artificial to suggest that this correlation should not be addressed when there is sufficient evidence to confirm that strategies are required to tackle the problem from this perspective. Jamaica remains convinced that it is central to our discourse, especially given our experience where we have found that one single firearm is often involved in multiple crimes.

Mr. President,

There should be a natural alliance between small arms weapons and non-weapon producers. For countries like Jamaica, which do not manufacture weapons but are plagued by illegal gun smuggling, we believe there is great merit in forging partnerships that would arrest the problem through increased collaboration and cooperation. We stand ready to work with others in this regard.

Mr. President,

The Government of Jamaica has been working assiduously to respond to some of the challenges that I have highlighted. To this end, several measures are being pursued to restore public order and safety, and to assure the security of our citizens. These include activities to ensure operational strategies and institutional changes, policy enhancement and legislative amendments. Among the priorities are reducing arms trafficking, disarming criminal networks and increasing penalties for the illegal use and possession of firearms. The Firearms Licensing Authority, which regulates the use of legal weapons and ammunition, is being strengthened to increase the Authority's accountability and improve its capacity to track firearm applications.

Similarly, the Private Security Regulatory Authority Act governing the private security industry will be amended to ensure that the requisite standards are in place for the collaborative work required with the police. We are grateful for the support being provided by the UN through the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), as a longstanding and invaluable partner, for its unswerving commitment in this exercise.

My delegation is also pleased to report that strong anti-corruption and anti-gang strategies, targeted social intervention initiatives, as well as the transformation of the Police Force will also be given priority as part of this broader objective of securing the future of our nation.

Mr. President,

Jamaica is prepared to play its part in arresting the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We call on all Member States to join us in this endeavor as it is only through collective action that we can begin to anticipate meaningful progress.

I thank you.