



Statement by
MR. KURT DAVIS
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

AGENDA ITEM: 99
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

FIRST COMMITTEE
SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chair,

Jamaica welcomes the progress made in the area of conventional weapons and ammunition. The pervasive presence of illicit small arms and ammunition is a daily threat to the health, safety, security and development of the Jamaican people. Preventing the diversion of conventional arms and ammunition to the illicit market or to unauthorised end use or users is a priority for my country. We therefore fully support all global, regional and national measures to address the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition.

At the domestic level, we are pursuing a multi-pronged approach that involves stronger stockpile management, infrastructure improvement in the security and justice sectors, violence prevention and social intervention programmes to address gang and gun crimes, and legislative reforms including a Firearms Amendment Act tabled in parliament this month to reform access and management of firearms and ammunition and specifically outlaw other weapons such as cluster munitions.

A very targeted effort is being made to disrupt gangs and other criminal enterprises who are heavily involved in the importation of illicit arms. This includes strengthening border management and expanding capacity to police our territorial waters, interdicting those involved in the guns-for-drugs trade and human trafficking. In this respect we express gratitude to our partners who have supported these efforts through technical cooperation, exchange of information, funding and the provision of equipment and vessels.

Jamaica also welcomes the support of and cooperation with regional and global partners such as UNLIREC, UNODA, UNODC, UNDP and CARICOM IMPACS. Through the Saving Lives Entity (SaLiEnt) Fund we are building capacity for interdiction, destruction, forensics and countering trafficking, and at the same time developing interventions among youth in schools and building capacity for fighting human trafficking. We are also working with UNLIREC and CARICOM IMPACS to develop Jamaica's National Plan of Action to implement the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap.

Our individual efforts, Mr. Chair, must be bolstered by serious action by arms producing countries to prevent the diversion of weapons into unauthorised use. We cannot keep mopping up the damage, while the pipeline keeps leaking.

Global commitments and cooperation are essential to addressing the proliferation of conventional weapons and ammunition and the effects thereof.

Jamaica welcomes the commitments reaffirmed and newly made at the 8th Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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 (BMS8) and looks forward to the cooperation that will flow from this outcome, including for capacity building to address recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design. We also support the early finalisation of arrangements for the establishment of the Fellowship Programme agreed at BMS8.

Likewise, we welcome the progress being made by the OEWG on Conventional Ammunition. We emphasise that the OEWG should place a great emphasis on ensuring clear commitments to international cooperation and assistance. It is vital that developing countries, like Jamaica, are able to increase capacity in forensic science, stockpile management and the regulatory framework. Jamaica therefore looks forward to the continuing work and engagements in that forum in the coming sessions.

Mr. Chair,

We remain firmly guided by the imperative to stem the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into our country, prevent their use, and ensure our national and citizen security in furtherance of our sustainable development objectives.

I thank you.