STATEMENT BY

H.E. RAYMOND O. WOLFE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

FIRST COMMITTEE
THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica associates itself with the statement made by Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica is deeply concerned about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and like most developing States faced with this major problem, seeks the urgent support of the international community to assiduously work towards a permanent solution. The unrestrained access and spread of these illegal weapons and ammunitions pose severe humanitarian and socio economic challenges to many States particularly developing countries. Faced with its gruesome consequences, the Jamaican Government has been obliged to divert scarce resources from national development budget in a bid to stifle its far reaching effects.

And so Mr. Chairman, while Jamaica unconditionally supports efforts to combat terrorism and the elimination of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, we must not marginalize the need for coordinated decisive action to curb the illicit trade in these weapons which are inflicting havoc in many of our countries, even as I speak. Mr. Chairman for countries like Jamaica, which is neither a producer nor large scale importer, small arms and light weapons constitute weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

In the past 4 years, Jamaica has implemented certain crime fighting measures with the aim of tackling the import, transit and export of narcotic drugs and illicit firearms and ammunitions. These include: the establishment of
specialized units within the police force to directly tackle firearms and drug related crimes; the passage of a Proceeds of Crime Act to confiscate assets of dealers in the illicit firearms and drug trades; and with the assistance of French, US and UK navy officials, has increased surveillance activity along the island's coastline.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the successful outcome earlier this year of The Third Biannual Meeting of States (BMS-3) to Consider the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action (POA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. We also note that during the Conference, one dominant concern of many States, particularly developing countries, was their inability to implement the POA due to their lack of financial and technical capacity. We therefore urgently request that developing countries receive the requisite assistance in a timely manner, to satisfactorily implement their commitments. Decisive action must be taken to prevent these weapons from falling into criminal hands. In this regard, Jamaica continues to call for the establishment of a system for the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and that ammunitions be incorporated into the POA as a matter for serious consideration and action.

Jamaica firmly supports the establishment of an arms trade treaty to impose strict controls on the trade in small arms and light weapons. Such a treaty should include, inter alia, the export, re-export, import, transfer, transit and transshipment of all conventional arms, including components, ammunition and the technology for their manufacture.
Mr. Chairman,

The work of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the area of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains crucial in our efforts to confront the challenges posed by the these illegal weapons. Jamaica endorses its work and hopes that the renewed expansion of operations by the Office for Disarmament Affairs through this office will continue for the benefit of the entire region. We wish also to acknowledge the tremendous support provided by the Regional Centre to the other Member States of CARICOM.

Jamaica takes this opportunity also to express its appreciation for the work undertaken by the UNDP in Kingston, as we seek to tame the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

I thank you.