STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

FIRST COMMITTEE
THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

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Mr. Chairman,
Jamaica aligns itself with the statement delivered by Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). I wish, however, to make the following additional observations.

Jamaica is pleased to participate in this thematic debate on conventional weapons, particularly in recognition of several positive developments at the global level to regulate and monitor conventional weapons since the last session of this Committee. Nevertheless, we continue to urge robust and sustained efforts to address urgent issues in this area, as undoubtedly the greatest incidence of injury and loss of human life result from these weapons.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion into the illegal trade continue to have a destabilising impact on our region. The violent effects of this are most tragically evident in conflict zones and areas of fragile peace, such as the ongoing conflict in Syria, growing instability in Afghanistan and recurring crises in Africa, among many other areas of conflict. Our concern about this situation is heightened by the increased flow of weapons channeled to non-state actors. The irresponsible trade in conventional weapons that leads to their diversion to unauthorized recipients in conflict zones and the direct equipping of non-state actors, not only poses a risk to the peace and security of the affected countries but adds to the growing instability around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica was pleased to welcome the rapid entry into force of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December last year. We were proud to participate in the First Conference of States Parties held this past August in Mexico and did so mindful of the tremendous efforts undertaken by the international community, including civil society, to secure the early into force of the Treaty.

We are satisfied that the First Conference has laid the foundation for the effective implementation of the Treaty, but are mindful that universal participation and its robust implementation will be the true measures of the success of our action. Consistent monitoring and effective public reporting will be essential in this regard.

We recognize the efforts of those States, international organisations and civil society groups that have been providing support and technical assistance for the implementation of the ATT in those States that lack the institutional capacity to do so. In relation to our own situation, Jamaica greatly appreciates the valuable assistance being provided by the European Union, under its ATT implementation Project. We are also presently working with CARICOM to develop model ATT legislation, based on the model developed by New Zealand and supported via funding provided by UNSCAR.
Mr. Chairman,

The ATT and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons are mutually reinforcing. The PoA, which remains the focal point for our efforts towards eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, requires our support now more than ever. While we welcomed the successful conclusion of the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2), held earlier this year, which focused on consideration of new technologies, we must now look towards setting an ambitious agenda for the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6). In this connection, we will need to ensure that our efforts towards the consideration of the PoA do not become a rote exercise of adopting an outcome document solely for the sake of it.

We are conscious of a growing cynicism, from Member States and civil society alike, surrounding the degree of progress we have collectively been making towards the full implementation of the PoA. As Member States, we need to ensure that we are making real progress in the domestic implementation of the PoA, even as we strengthen the measures for inter-state cooperation and capacity building.

These efforts must also be matched by meaningful and substantive consideration of this issue at the United Nations, to ensure that the mechanisms we develop remain relevant to a changing global security environment. As we move towards the Third Review Conference of the PoA in 2018, Jamaica looks to BMS6 as an important opportunity to reinvigorate the PoA process. We would support, therefore, placing a meaningful discussion on a legally binding instrument on marking and tracing for small arms and light weapons on the agenda of BMS6, as well as the explicit incorporation of ammunition within the PoA framework.

Mr. Chairman,
Jamaica welcomed the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2220 of May 2015 and its call for international cooperation and information-sharing to address the challenges associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

As a signatory to the Cluster Munitions Convention, we also welcomed the First Review Conference held in Croatia this year and the adoption of the Dubrovnik Declaration and Plan of Action. We are currently working towards ensuring our ratification at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, we are mindful of the importance of regional and sub-regional efforts in assisting Member States to fulfill our obligations and effectively implement the relevant instruments. In this regard, my delegation commends the indispensable role played by the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).