STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

by

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

ON

THEMATIC CLUSTER: CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

FIRST COMMITTEE
71ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Please check against delivery
Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reiterates that it is neither manufacturers, exporters nor a large importers of conventional weapons, but we have not been spared the destructive effects of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and associated ammunition. We continue to be adversely affected as a result of this cross-border illegal activity which is linked to illegal drug trafficking, money laundering and cyber crime to name a few.

Experience has taught us, Mr. Chairman, that these unfortunate realities can be successfully confronted if we adopt a collaborative approach.

In this spirit, CARICOM has established regional mechanisms and frameworks to coordinate our efforts to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These include the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), which was established as part of a management framework and is mandated to give effect to the regional crime and security agenda.

Likewise Mr. Chairman, the CARICOM Heads of Government issued a Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2011, which emphasized the "important role to be played by States that manufacture small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in preventing their diversion to the illicit trade." The Member States of CARICOM wish to reiterate this position and to urge all States that manufacture these weapons of the responsibility to increase their efforts aimed at reducing the possibility that these weapons would be diverted for illegal purposes.
We are, however, encouraged by the forward momentum over the past year to regulate and monitor conventional weapons. At the same time, we urge continued global efforts to address these threats.

CARICOM Member States had previously expressed that the adoption and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty ushered in an era of hope for our region as small arms and light weapons are included in the scope of this international, legally binding instrument.

We note with satisfaction the progressive measures that have been taken within the ambit of the Treaty since its entry into force. We wish to highlight in particular the convening of the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT in August of this year. A number of CARICOM Member States participated in that Conference and we are pleased at the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund and at the decision of the Conference to create an Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the ATT. Through the Working Group we look forward to the sharing of experiences, challenges and best practices in the area of implementation of the Treaty.

CARICOM urges all Member States that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify the ATT. Security challenges are best tackled when we work in concert with each other and it is evident that a collective approach is needed to stem the illicit trade in conventional arms. We remain committed to supporting the work of the United Nations in this area.

CARICOM welcomed the successful conclusion of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action (BMS6), which took place in June of this year. Under the able leadership of the distinguished Permanent Representative of Jamaica, H.E. Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, the Meeting considered the many
dynamics involved in the implementation of the Programme of Action. As Small Island Developing States, whose sustainable development is intricately linked to the safety and security of its people, CARICOM welcomed references in the Outcome Document to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly overt references to Goal 16 and target 16.4.

We believe that a good foundation has been laid for the Third Review Conference in 2018 and we intend to participate meaningfully in those deliberations as well.

We view the POA and ATT as mutually reinforcing, and have joined many other States, particularly during the recently concluded BMS6 meeting, in advocating that as States begin to implement the ATT, its links with other instruments will be important.

CARICOM, cognizant of the complementarities between the ATT and the POA, and in light of our capacity constraints, are seeking to identify practical measures that allow harmonized implementation of the ATT and POA.

In this respect, CARICOM IMPACS has worked with Member States of CARICOM to draft Model ATT Legislation. This legislation explores synergies between the ATT and other international instruments relating to arms control, including the POA.

CARICOM continues to embrace the support provided by regional United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. This organization has supported and assisted Member States of CARICOM in capacity building measures and technical assistance programmes and we look forward to continued collaboration.
Mr. Chairman,

We are also mindful of the indispensable role of women and the engagement of civil society to aid in combating the spread of small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman,

CARICOM remains committed to working, as members of this august body, to address the challenges posed by the proliferation, misuse and unacceptable harm caused by small arms and light weapons and its ammunition, as well as other categories of conventional weapons.

I thank you.