8th December 2015

Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair-designate of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) 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, to be held in New York from 6-10 June 2016.

Indeed the follow-up section of the Programme of Action (PoA) envisages the convening of Biennial Meetings of States “to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action”.

I would like to invite you to open, informal consultations on BMS6 on Tuesday, 15 December, at 3pm, in the ECOSOC Chamber, with the aim of exchanging views on the possible agenda, outcome, and other substantive and organisational aspects of BMS6. In line with standing practice, this informal meeting will be conducted in English.

Also in line with past practice – and with the mandate of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI), adopted by consensus in 2005 – it is foreseen that BMS6 will consider the implementation of the ITI as well as implementation of the PoA.

**Working methods**

I would kindly suggest the use of the same working methods as were successfully employed in the past under Programme of Action meetings. This included an early circulation of a “zero-draft” of a possible outcome document, with ample possibility for open, transparent consultations in the lead-up to the meeting itself.

It is my intention to thus hold several open, informal consultations in New York and possibly in Geneva prior to BMS6.

Also, as there is insufficient time for a general debate at BMS meetings, it is suggested that at BMS6 – similar to the previous BMSs – there will be no general debate or high-level segment, but that the meeting will move directly into the thematic debate. In conformity with past practice, I encourage States to consider their national
report as their contribution of views on the general implementation of the PoA. I understand that the Secretariat will shortly be issuing a Note Verbale requesting States to submit their national reports in a timely manner in advance of BMS6.

I would also strongly encourage States, in due course, to provide working papers for consideration at BMS6, as I believe these would be valuable to our discussions and enrich the outcome of the meeting.

**BMS6 agenda**

Regarding the BMS6 agenda, allow me to first enumerate the recommendations for agenda items for BMS6 already presented to us from previous PoA meetings.

At the 2012 Review Conference on the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, States agreed that international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building (including provision of equipment, technology and training), should be an integral element of all PoA and ITI meetings (section III, paras 3 and 4).1

The 2015 MGE2 Chair’s summary also provides a list of issues raised by States which could be taken up at BMS6 (para 54). I have listed these here under suggested sub-categories for ease of reference:

**Strengthening the PoA and ITIJ in light of recent developments in SALW technology:**
- (a) Consideration of the need for further agreed guidance for marking polymer weapons; the marking, record-keeping and tracing of modular weapons; and strengthening 3D printing regulations in the context of 3D weapon printing, including further dialogue with industry on the above issues;

**International cooperation and assistance under the PoA and the ITI:**
- (b) Consideration of enhancing the modalities related to international cooperation and assistance, including the transfer of technology;
- (c) Consideration of an enhanced role for regional and subregional organizations in international cooperation and assistance and the exchange of information;
- (d) Consideration of the further utility of national reports submitted on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument for the provision of information on matching needs with resources;
- (e) Consideration of existing trust fund modalities for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and whether the setting up of other trust funds is required.

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1 In the 2012 RevCon outcome document, States also mentioned physical security measures of small arms and light weapons (stockpile management) as a relevant issue to be further addressed. Pursuant to this, the issue of stockpile management, including physical security measures of small arms and light weapons, has already been comprehensively considered during BMS5 (2014).
I consider the above elements from the RevCon and MGE2 the basis for the discussion of BMS6 agenda items. With the cooperation of all delegations, it is my intention to reach informal agreement on the agenda items of BMS6 as soon as possible.

Secretary-General’s report
In accordance with A/C.1/70/L.39, a report by the UN Secretary-General will be tabled at BMS6 for the consideration of States. The report will address, inter alia, new developments in SALW technology; the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001; as well as options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

I believe that the contents of the SG’s report could also facilitate our discussions at BMS6.

Bureau meetings
As per usual practice under PoA processes, a Bureau will be convened for BMS6 consisting of members from all regional groups. I understand the Secretariat will shortly send a request to regional groups to each nominate amongst themselves two members for the Bureau, except for the Latin American and Caribbean Group – the group from which the Chair-Designate has been nominated – to which the request will be made for only one Bureau member.

Sponsorship programme
Past meetings under the Programme of Action have benefitted tremendously from a sponsorship programme which facilitates the participation of representatives from capital, as well as from regional and sub-regional organizations, at these PoA meetings. I would kindly request States which are in a position to do so to consider providing necessary resources to put in place such a programme.

Questions for the open consultations
I would be very grateful if you could contribute your government’s views and suggestions during our informal consultations on Tuesday, 15 December. In particular it would be appreciated if you could share initial national ideas on the possible agenda and outcome of BMS6.

I thank you in advance for contributing substantively at an early stage to the process. This ensures that the preparations for BMS6 will be transparent, timely, and fully inclusive. I look forward to an interchange of views on achieving our joint objectives, also through bilateral consultations. Let me stress that throughout the coming year I will be available for bilateral consultations on any issue that may be of concern to you regarding BMS6, as is my team.
Please note that all relevant information pertaining to BMS6 will be posted on the website of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs: www.un.org/disarmament.

Please accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

E. Courtenay Rattray
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the United Nations

To: All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York