STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

AT THE
MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION
TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT SMALL ARMS
AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

THEMATIC DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEM 7(b): Progress made
in the implementation of the international instrument
to enable states to identify and trace, in a timely and
reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons

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Please check against delivery
Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community.

CARICOM is firmly committed to the full implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. Our positions on the importance of the ITI and the areas which require strengthening are well known, and were articulated most recently at the Meeting of Government Experts in May 2011. We welcome this opportunity to consider holistically the ITI, which we find to be an indispensable companion to the Programme of Action.

Preventing the diversion of small arms and light weapons into the illicit trade is a matter of highest importance, as our region is unfortunately all too familiar with the devastating impact of the circulation of illegal weapons in our societies. The ITI is a practical tool providing clear guidelines in three core areas: marking, record keeping and cooperation in tracing; we recognize that the three areas are interlinked and good practices in marking and recording keeping yield better prospects for effective cooperation in tracing. From CARICOM’s perspective the ITI holds great promise for curbing the illicit trade in SALW since it can assist states with identifying points of diversion, source of weapons and illegal trading routes, thereby giving law enforcement information necessary to disrupt such routes.

As we have mentioned earlier in the week, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, has embarked on a major initiative to establish the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network (RIBIN) which will facilitate the tracking of guns and ammunition used in crimes through ballistic identification. This information will be shared among law enforcement agencies in participating CARICOM Member States and once it becomes operational, will link the regional network with
international systems, including, *inter alia*, the United States National Integrated Ballistics Identification Network (NIBIN).

CARICOM Member States are non-manufacturing States and low scale importers. For our part, at the technical level, CARICOM is participating in an Organisation of American States’ project entitled “Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean.” Under this project training and equipment has been provided to several CARICOM Member States for the marking of firearms and for record keeping. This will allow for the marking of firearms at the point of importation as well as confiscated weapons.

Several CARICOM Member States have also signed on to the United States of America’s e-trace programme, which allows us to trace firearms used in criminal activity against a large database in a timely manner.

Nevertheless, as states which do not manufacture small arms and light weapons, we wish to stress the responsibility of major producing states with respect to the marking of weapons manufactured in those states.

*Madam Chair,*

Strengthening of cross border controls is a related issue of high priority to CARICOM. Our porous and remote borders, as well as our region’s geographic circumstance, leave us vulnerable to the illicit movement of small arms and light weapons. We must raise awareness and build capacity of law enforcement personnel, especially border security officials in respect of the ITI as a critical tool in our efforts to fight the illegal trade of weapons.

In this regard, CARICOM reiterates its call for the establishment of a broad binding global regime to marking and tracing as opposed to the present voluntary, bilateral arrangements. Such an approach, we believe, would help in the establishment of internationally accepted
norms and standards that would effectively regulate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Madam Chair,

International assistance and capacity building are cross cutting aspects of the ITI. For small states such as CARICOM Member States, international assistance particularly in the areas of capacity building, technical assistance and provision of equipment is necessary for us to fully implement the ITI. Some specific areas where international assistance could complement national efforts include: building reporting capacity, technical assistance to computerize and centralize records, marking equipment, legislative drafting and training in the use of marking equipment.

Given the practical and technical nature of the ITI, a forum for the exchange of best practices, discussion on the impact of new manufacturing techniques and technology and consideration of implementation challenges by the technical experts, such as that occurred at the MGE last May, serve to strengthen the ITI. We support should periodic encounters.

Madam Chair,

CARICOM reiterates its position that the ITI should have been made legally binding with provisions on ammunition. The argument that there is no technology to mark ammunition, no longer holds true. In this regard, we again reiterate our full support for the conclusion of an international legally binding tracing instrument that includes the issue of ammunition.

I thank you.