STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON AGENDA ITEM 7(b)

"International Instrument to Enable States to Identify
And Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner,
Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons"

IN THE THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN 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

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March 21, 2012
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
Madam Chairperson

Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), but wishes to make some comments in its national capacity.

As far as we are concerned, marking, tracing, cooperation and proper record keeping are indispensable in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Consistent with the provisions of the International Tracing Instrument ("the ITI"), Trinidad and Tobago has adopted certain measures to trace illicit small arms and light weapons. We have enacted legislation to ensure that these objectives are achieved. For example, the Firearms Act provides for the marking of all firearms for the purposes of identification and tracing.

Additionally, in order to enhance our capacity in the areas of marking, tracing and database management, the relevant Trinidad and Tobago authorities have been working on the development of a National Training Mechanism which would be linked to a computerized database of all legally owned firearms. This system would provide for weapons acquired for the armed forces to be entered into the database, as well as those purchased by private security firms, as well as by civilians with the authority to do so. The mechanism involves the recording of the serial number of every firearm that has been entered into the database and this is supported by way of ballistic test firing. Consequently, every firearm that has been entered into the database to date has also been test fired and that information has been captured within the IBIS. It is expected that the database together with other measures would assist the authorities in determining if and when firearms obtained legally are used to facilitate criminal activities.

Madam Chairperson

Local law enforcement agencies also use the International E-Tracing Instrument to enhance their capacity in the area of tracing. At the bilateral level, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago concluded a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with the Government of the United States under which the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service collaborates with the United States Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosive Agency ("ATF") to facilitate the use of that agency's E-Tracing Instrument. The MOU also makes it possible for local law enforcement officials to have access to United States gun tracing databases, and makes provision for the training of Trinidad and Tobago nationals in this area of work. Furthermore, the MOU enables local authorities to determine the possible origins of firearms used in the commission of crimes.

Trinidad and Tobago views cooperation at the bilateral level as being consistent with its often repeated position that cooperation and sharing of technology between and among Member States would assist in the tracing and seizing of firearms.
While Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the role of cooperation at the global level to implement obligations under the ITI, it remains conscious of the importance of the development of national institutions to fulfill these undertakings. As a result, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has established an Inter-Ministerial Firearms Retrieval Committee ("the Committee") whose mandate is to support local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to reduce gun-related homicides and other similar offences. The Committee recognizes the value of information sharing and has established a system to track and store information on firearms used in the commission of crimes.

Madam Chairperson

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to underscore the importance of the ITI as an important component in the international community's arsenal to combat the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. We are hopeful that the Preparatory Committee would agree on concrete recommendations to enhance the capacity of the ITI as we move towards the Review Conference. In this regard, we call on Member States to take into consideration the ideas discussed at the Meeting of Government Experts (MGE) as a basis for arriving at such recommendations.

Thank you.