Madame Chairperson,

I join others in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of Jamaica’s support during the work of this Committee.

I would also like to thank Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his overview of the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The delegation of Jamaica associates itself fully with the statement by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Madame Chairperson,

Disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be priority areas on the international peace and security agenda as we continue to face a complex security environment. While there have been some achievements there is,
quite understandably, disappointment at the setbacks experienced in multilateral disarmament efforts. The situation remains a challenging one, casting doubts on the will of the international community to move decisively to promote disarmament and prevent proliferation.

The twin failures of the 2005 Review Conference of States Parties to the Nuclear Non–Proliferation Treaty and the absence of any references to nuclear disarmament and non–proliferation in the World Summit Outcome document point glaringly to the huge gap between rhetoric and practical efforts to achieve genuine progress in the strengthening of the nuclear disarmament and non proliferation regime.

Madame Chairperson,

Jamaica reaffirms that it considers the NPT as the bedrock of the global disarmament and non–proliferation regime and the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We are extremely concerned therefore that recent developments only serve to undermine the Treaty. In this regard, Jamaica believes that urgent and firm steps must be taken to address the challenges and threats to the integrity of and confidence in the Treaty, including as stated in the report of the Secretary General on Nuclear Disarmament (A/61/127), achieving further irreversible cuts in nuclear arsenals; ensuring more effective compliance measures; and reducing the threat of proliferation not only to states but also to non–state actors. In other words, the approach to disarmament must be based on the principles of transparency, irreversibility, and verification.

In the final analysis, however, Jamaica remains convinced that it is only through total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be guaranteed. We make no distinction between nuclear disarmament and non–proliferation. In this regard, we urge Nuclear Weapons States to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under Article VI of the NPT. By the same token, while underscoring the right of all states to peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with Article IV of the NPT, we insist that this right must be accompanied by the commitment and obligation to
comply with the verification and safeguards provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Jamaica maintains that the IAEA has a critical role to play in reducing the threats posed to international peace and security.

We reiterate the importance of the universality of the Treaty and call on the three states currently outside the NPT framework to accede to the Treaty and place their facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

A practical step in building confidence in the non-proliferation regime is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zone. The NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean under the treaty of Tlatelolco has served us well in this region and we believe should be replicated in other regions. We, therefore, welcome the recent establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and support calls for the establishment of a similar zone in the Middle East. This will go a far way in reducing tensions in that region.

Madame Chairperson,

In tandem with the NPT, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty constitutes a major plank in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome the recent ratification by Vietnam of the CTBT bringing us closer to the entry into force of the Treaty. Success of the Treaty depends on its universality and verifiability and in this context, and as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT, we urge ratification, particularly by Annex II countries, to ensure its entry into force.

Like the rest of the international community, Jamaica is disturbed by the stated intention of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to carry out nuclear testing. We urge that country to refrain from such action and respect the current moratorium on nuclear testing.
Madame Chairperson,

We welcome the opportunity provided by the recent session of the Disarmament Commission to engage in meaningful deliberation on the way forward and in establishing, promoting and elaborating global norms on disarmament.

Jamaica also notes recent proposals by nuclear States to prevent the weaponization of outer space and commence preliminary work on a legal instrument for halting the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes; we believe this trend could provide the catalyst for renewed confidence in the disarmament machinery.

Madame Chairperson,

Even as the international community is rightly focusing attention on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, this should not divert attention from the issue of small arms and light weapons. Without minimizing the importance of efforts in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation field, it is a fact that small arms and light weapons kill and maim thousands of people daily and exacerbate tension in zones of conflict, particularly in Africa.

Jamaica does not manufacture arms, yet the easy access to illegal weapons and ammunitions and the subsequent high levels of gun violence, place an unwarranted burden on our social and economic system. When a significant proportion of the national budget is used to tackle crime and violence, then there can be no question about the linkage between disarmament and development.
As a country that is directly affected by the illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition, Jamaica was therefore deeply disappointed at the failure of the 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. Jamaica and other CARICOM countries had participated actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the regional meeting held in Antigua, Guatemala which adopted a declaration containing elements pertinent to our region and had looked forward to building on the 2001 PoA.

We should not, however, allow the inability of the Conference to advance implementation of the Programme of Action to compromise efforts to prevent the continued illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. It is in this context that we reiterate our support for resolution 60/519 adopted at the last General Assembly and which established the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

More must, however, be done to properly address this problem. It is our view that international efforts should be geared towards adopting a legally binding instrument on markings and tracings for small arms and light weapons. Governments, including those in manufacturing countries, have a responsibility to ensure that weapons and ammunitions where legally acquired, are not diverted to criminals to fuel transnational crime or to arm terrorist groups. Proper checks and balances, including customs control, would ensure the legitimacy of the legal trade and in this way, both local and international law enforcement agencies would be in a better position to trace illegally acquired weapons.

In the Caribbean, concerted efforts are being made at the national and community levels to curb the proliferation of illicit small arms and ammunitions. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation and initiatives are, however, crucial if we are to make any meaningful headway in fighting these phenomena. In this context, we acknowledge the initiatives by the UNDP and the Regional Centre for Disarmament and
Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the area of Coordinating Action on Small Arms. We are also supportive of efforts aimed at concluding an Arms Trade Treaty.

Madame Chairperson,

Jamaica shares the view that we must continually reinforce the importance of multilateralism and multilaterally-agreed solutions to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including SALW. Through the strengthening of the multilateral framework, we can achieve our common disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

Thank you.