Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Bahamas, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

At the outset, let me sincerely congratulate you for your election as President of this historic Diplomatic Conference. You have shown a great commitment towards the achievement of an Arms Trade Treaty throughout the entire preparatory process, and we are certain that your tireless efforts, together with the commitment of member States, will culminate at this Conference, with a strong and worthwhile Treaty. Let me also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau, as well as to the representatives of the Secretariat.

Mr. President,

This group of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean are truly committed to the necessity of agreeing on a strong, robust, effective and legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. We have supported this objective since the beginning of the preparatory process, and you can be certain that we will continue to do so throughout this Diplomatic Conference. You can count on our support to reach a successful outcome by the end of this Conference.

Allow me to reiterate some of the issues that we consider to be of paramount importance with respect to the substance of the future ATT that we are about to negotiate.

1. First and foremost, the ATT should constitute a legally binding instrument, agreed upon by States and hence governing the relationship between them.
2. The ATT cannot be understood as an exporters agreement. Therefore, it must reflect an equitable balance of rights and obligations for all its States Parties. The implementation of the Treaty must attend to the needs of both exporters and importers.

3. Positive dialogue between states involved in a transfer must be an essential part of any risk assessment process. Interaction between parties to a transfer is necessary for joint implementation of the Treaty. We particularly support the notion of a consultation mechanism allowing recipient countries an opportunity to take the necessary measures to avoid a denial of transfer.

4. We must strive for a strong and robust ATT, but at the same time the Treaty should be effective.

5. Regarding the preamble of the Treaty, we deem it pertinent to make a reference to the notion that the absence or commonly agreed international standards for the transfer of conventional arms contributes to armed violence.

6. We also want to emphasize that one of the main objectives of the Treaty is to prevent the diversion of arms to the illicit market. An objective that must be operationalized through clear implementation mechanisms.

7. Regarding the scope of the Treaty, although our preference is to have a general definition that includes all arms that are not of a nuclear, chemical or biological nature, we could be flexible to work on the basis of the proposal included in your Chairman’s Paper, in the understanding that the list of conventional arms in the Treaty will include all types of conventional weapons, regardless of their purpose and without exceptions, including small arms and light weapons, ammunition, components, parts, technology and related materials. Taking into account the object and purpose of the ATT, opening the door to exceptions would create a serious loophole in the future Treaty.

8. With regard to the transactions or activities to be covered by the Treaty, these should include all types of transfers. Creating exceptions will only lead to important loopholes in the Treaty.
9. We stress that the notion of information sharing regarding details of exports authorizations should be an obligation of exporting States vis-à-vis transit and transshipment States. We consider that it is essential that such States give their authorization prior to such activities.

10. It is important to have clear rules for the implementation of a future ATT, and for this reason we should avoid using ambiguous terms and concepts, such as “political abuse”, which may undermine the Treaty with arbitrary interpretations.

11. With this in mind, criteria established for the assessment of risk of misuse of the weapons must be clear and legally defined.

12. On record keeping we consider it appropriate to establish a minimum timeframe of 20 years.

13. It is also very important to retain the obligation to take all appropriate measures to prevent the diversion of arms into the illicit market.

14. Regarding international cooperation, we consider this to be a key element for the successful implementation of this future legal instrument, and within this context, we also underscore the necessity of information sharing among Parties to the Treaty.

15. International assistance is a key component in ensuring that the implementation of the ATT is carried out in an effective manner, and the provisions in this regard should be strengthened.

16. Concerning the final provisions, we consider it pertinent for the Treaty not to allow reservations at least regarding its scope and criteria.

17. We believe that the Review Conference should be given a mandate that would allow for the eventual expansion of the Treaty’s scope due to future technological innovations in the arms industry.
18. Finally, on peaceful settlement of disputes, we believe that this issue should include a reference to article 33.1 of the UN Charter in order to foresee a wider range of possibilities in this subject matter. A proper mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes would prevent the arbitrary imposition of ideological or political views in the implementation of the Treaty.

Mr. President,

We are committed to the necessity of agreeing on an Arms Trade Treaty that will establish legally binding international regulations and mechanisms with the highest common international standards to control the trade of arms. Rest assured that we will work tirelessly and in close cooperation with you and with all Member States towards the attainment of this important objective during this Conference.

Thank you very much.