STATEMENT BY

MS. SHORNA-KAY RICHARDS
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES, A.I.
PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

CARICOM

AT THE

FIFTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES 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

ON

AGENDA ITEM 6:
STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING PHYSICAL SECURITY
MEASURES OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
16TH JUNE 2014
Mr. Chairman,

I take the floor on behalf of the Fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We congratulate you and your Bureau on your election to guide the work of this important Fifth Biennial Meeting, which is tasked with considering the state of implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument.

We view this meeting as providing a timely opportunity for the international community to build on the successful 2012 Review Conference and allowing for more sustained attention to targeted approaches aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels. In this vein, we believe the opportunity should also be used to examine how implementation can be made more relevant given the dynamic nature of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The current crime and security environment in the Caribbean, characterised by high levels of armed violence, is a stark reminder that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continue to lead to widespread human suffering and insecurity in our societies; posing a systemic and pervasive threat to the social and economic development of many nations. In underscoring the common concern, shared recognition and collective responsibility to address this scourge, CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action and its full and effective implementation.

Turning to today's substantive agenda item, CARICOM Member States view stockpile management, including physical security measures and the destruction of small arms and light weapons and related ammunition as essential for preventing the diversion, easy availability and continued misuse of such weapons. In this respect and towards the implementation of its regional commitments to the Programme of Action, CARICOM Heads of Government have committed to working together to enhance the management and security of small arms and light weapons and ammunition stockpiles, in their 2011 Declaration on Small and Light Weapons.

The opportunity at BMS5 to consider implementation of obligations on stockpile management, including physical security measures is therefore one to which we attach significant importance. We believe that several of the areas of urgent needs and priorities emanating from BMS3 on this issue are just as relevant at this BMS5 meeting.
Mr. Chairman,

Against the backdrop of strong political commitment and robust action, CARICOM Member States have made strides in implementing the highest international standards for the management, storage and safe disposal of small arms and light weapons through significant support received from the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), the Organisation of American States and our bilateral partners. We remain committed to continuing our collective efforts in this regard.

To date these activities have been largely carried out within the context of UNLIREC’s Stockpile Management and Firearms Destruction Assistance Package for Caribbean States for the period 2010-2014. This assistance package has so far led to, among other things, improved security for more than 200 stockpile facilities across the region – approximately 120 facilities have been secured; destruction of over 40,000 firearms and close to 58 tonnes of surplus and unstable ammunition. Other practical measures undertaken include the development and delivery of fourteen (14) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS); training of officials on SOPS by technical experts, as well as the provision of forty (40) international standard padlocks and padlock fittings for stockpile facilities to increase security at stockpile facilities. Other equipment provided include one (1) set of hydraulic shears for cutting firearms and the building and provision of a Small Arms Ammunition Burning Tanks to eleven (11) States.

CARICOM Member States wish to commend and thank UNLIREC for its ongoing support to the region in the implementation of the PoA, particularly in the areas of stockpile management and the destruction and disposal of firearms and ammunition. CARICOM also commends UNLIREC for the manner in which it conducts its work in the region. Indeed, in providing assistance to CARICOM States the Regional Centre has quite appropriately taken the needs, interests and priorities of each Member State into account through the conduct of National Baseline Assessments.

Mr. Chairman,

While we have made some progress in implementation, there is still scope for strengthening stockpile management and physical security measures at the national, regional and global levels. To be effective, efforts must be comprehensive, multifaceted and sustained over a protracted period.

One area for urgent attention is ammunition. We have been reminded time and time again that ammunition is not included in the scope of the PoA. And while this is indeed the case, we can no
longer continue to sideline addressing stockpile management in a comprehensive manner. As a region disproportionately affected by this scourge, we cannot over-emphasise that from a practical/technical perspective, effective implementation of measures on stockpile management cannot be achieved without the inclusion of ammunition.

CARICOM states are keen to receive enhanced sustainable capacity building in inventory management, in particular accounting control procedures, audits for checks and balances, as well as security assessment of warehouses. CARICOM supports action dealing with the promotion of environmentally friendly disposal of small arms and light weapons as well as life-cycle management. The enhanced provision of specialist training to personnel involved in stockpile management, security, safety and managing and coordinating disposal is therefore critical to ensuring effective stockpile management.

CARICOM strongly supports increased attention to the role of women in stockpile management in keeping with the annual General Assembly Resolution on “Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control” and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The work of UNILREC in promoting women’s participation in stockpile management and other areas through its training courses provides a good basis upon which to build.

Mr. Chairman,

One area that merits special attention, in our estimation, is that of the importance of establishing indicators, benchmarks and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which will allow for critical self-assessment. To support this proposal consideration should be given to the formation of a regional peer review and evaluation mechanism which will be comprised of mainly regional experts.

In conclusion, we look forward to a meaningful outcome to the deliberations of this meeting and we have every confidence in your abilities to successfully achieve this and in so doing, fulfil the expectations held by many on the result of this fifth biennial meeting. Let us resolve to spare no efforts to create an effective platform to halt the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

I thank you.