RESPONSE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA ON MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTION 67/48 ENTITLED Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control.

Background

Jamaica’s interest in this issue dates back to its lead role in the adoption of a Presidential Statement during our Presidency of the Security Council in July 2000. That Presidential Statement recognized the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, as well as the importance of their increased participation in all aspects of the conflict prevention and resolution process. In keeping with this trend, Jamaica was among the co-sponsors of resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control which was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2010.

In 2012, Jamaica continued its cosponsorship of resolution 67/48 entitled, Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control.

Numerous reports have attested to the fact that women and girls disproportionately suffer serious human rights violations during armed conflict and wars which also lead to the displacement of families. Jamaica is not affected by armed conflict, but faces a challenge as it relates to armed violence. According to statistics available within CARICOM, approximately 70% of the homicides committed in the region feature the use of a firearm. Men are often the victims of gun crimes but women are often left to become the sole breadwinner for families and to cope with the resulting emotional and mental trauma.

Jamaica’s geographical location and porous borders make it susceptible to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The nexus between the illicit trade in arms and the illegal drug trade further compounds the situation, and takes a significant toll both on the economy and the human and social fabric of the society. The climate of insecurity which is generated contributes to social dislocation, and affects the vulnerable in the society, including youth and women.

While the Government is committed to tackling this scourge, it is recognized that a multifaceted approach is required. To this end, Jamaica is of the view that at the international level, member states must take tangible steps to fully implement The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (POA), and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), aimed at addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as elements related to marking and tracing. Likewise, the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will also contribute to curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, by preventing their diversion from the legal global trade to the illicit market. Jamaica signed the Treaty on 3rd June when it opened for signature and will take the necessary steps thereafter to ensure that we are in a position to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. The Government of Jamaica encourages other states to do likewise.
Recent Developments

At the national level, Jamaica continues to include women in the deliberations and policy making as it relates to addressing crime and violence.

The National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE), which was approved on 8th March 2011, includes targets and indicators to be accomplished by the Ministry of National Security relating to the design and implementation of a comprehensive crime plan. This entails the following:

- strategies to address gender-based violence and other forms of violence against women;
- the establishment of a safe house and a 24-hour hotline to temporarily assist victims of human trafficking; and,
- the use of temporary special measures to increase the representation of women in the Jamaica Constabulary Force[1].

The Government has also expanded the Community Policing Programme to include several new communities island-wide. We continue to emphasize the important contribution of all members of the community including women, to these programmes. In keeping with this thrust, the Ministry of National Security, in collaboration with stakeholders, is currently working to develop a comprehensive Community Safety and Security Strategy. This Strategy is expected to take a sustained and coordinated approach to social intervention programmes and will cover critical areas such as prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Despite these efforts, there is need for technical assistance and capacity building support from the international community for the full and effective implementation of the POA and the ATT. These include, but are not limited to, training for capacity building in order to strengthen ballistics, forensic and intelligence gathering capabilities; training for border security, including maritime security; as well as training to enable first responders to better detect and respond to the trends in the movement of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. There is also need for capacity building to facilitate improvements in our legislative drafting capacity. The importance of international cooperation and assistance cannot be over emphasized.

Jamaica will continue to remain engaged on issues to stem the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at regional and international levels. Similarly, Jamaica remains unwavering in its support for general and complete disarmament in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament. The Government, therefore, looks forward to the High-Level meeting on Nuclear Disarmament to be held in the margins of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly as well as ongoing discussions in the lead up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We should be reminded that a nuclear detonation knows no borders and that it will affect all states and all peoples, including women and children. This was indeed the message emanating from the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo in March 2013, and which will continue.

to be the focus of deliberations at the follow-up Conference to be hosted by the Government of Mexico at a date to be announced.

The Government of Jamaica remains hopeful that the international community will demonstrate the necessary political will to make tangible progress on these issues as we seek to promote and attain sustainable peace and security globally.