In her inaugural address to the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly during its 65th Session in September 2010, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the first female Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, called for the adoption of a resolution on the issue of women’s participation, at the decision-making level, in matters relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. This call was made as the country with lead responsibility for crime and security in the quasi-Cabinet of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and in the context of the tenth (10th) anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” which urged Member States to “ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.”

Consistent with the call made by the Honourable Prime Minister, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago subsequently became the main sponsor of resolutions A/RES/65/69 and A/RES/67/48, respectively, entitled “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control,” which were both adopted by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly on 08 December, 2010, and on 03 December, 2012.

I. Leadership by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in promoting Implementation at the International Level

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has led and co-sponsored a number of key High Level Events aimed at promoting dialogue on the empowerment of women, equal participation of women in decision-making processes and the role of women in matters related to women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. These initiatives include:

i. Side Event on Women's Political Participation, United Nations Headquarters, New York, September 2011

Trinidad and Tobago hosted the side event, "Women's Political Participation", in the margins of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. This event was attended by a host of prominent female world leaders which culminated in the signing of the "Joint Declaration on Women and Political Participation".
ii. High Level Side Event on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, United Nations Headquarters, New York, December 2012

With a view to bolstering support for the 2012 resolution, which was eventually adopted by consensus as A/RES/67/48 on 03 December 2012, Trinidad and Tobago convened a High Level Side Event on 25 September, 2012, in the margins of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Side Event provided an invaluable opportunity to expand the discourse on women's empowerment in the context of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The Side Event, which was chaired by the Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the Honourable Prime Minister, and moderated by Agnes Marcaillou, former Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, provided an invaluable opportunity to expand the discourse on women's empowerment in the context of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Panelists included Her Excellency Tarja Kaarina-Halonen, former President of Finland; Senator the Honourable Bob Carr, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia; Senator the Honourable Arnold Nicholson, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica; the Honourable Espen Barth Bide, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway; Angela Kane, High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and Anna MacDonald, Head of Arms Control of OXFAM International.

II: National Implementation

Locally, equal opportunities have been promoted for women's participation at the decision-making level in matters regarding disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including the appointment in 2012, of a female Minister of Justice.

Measures taken to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in the field of disarmament at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels:

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has traditionally recognized the importance of women's participation in matters relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. This recognition is underscored by the ascendency of women to senior ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the three contingents of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

Women in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS)

Women in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service have played crucial roles within the various Departments of the Service, and are directly engaged in the decision making processes related to disarmament, nonproliferation and arms control.

It is, therefore, noteworthy that the post of Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) is held by a woman for the first time in the history of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. That officer oversees illegal firearm operations, and as such, represents the Police Service in the field of disarmament at the local, sub-regional and regional levels.
The position of Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of overseeing the Police Armourer Shop is also held by a female police officer. Five women police officers are currently undertaking armorer's apprenticeships as a prelude to becoming armourers.

The Organised Crime and Narcotics Bureau, which is the main branch of the Police Service mandated to investigate illegal firearm activities, has been headed by a female police officer, and routinely assigns several female police officers to conduct its investigations.

**Women in the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobag, in conjunction with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, sought to support and strengthen the key participatory role played by Latin American and Caribbean women in combating illicit trafficking, by launching the publication entitled "Forces of Change: Profiles of Latin American and Caribbean Women in Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms" at the Side Event on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. This foreword in this publication was contributed by the Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The participation of women is especially relevant as it relates to preventing the transfer of conventional weapons, if they are likely to be used in the commission of gender-based violence or violence against women and girls. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago's recognition of the need to substantively involve women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is evidenced by the promotion of women to senior positions in relevant State agencies and Statutory Bodies such as the Director, Forensic Science Centre, and the Director, Police Complaints Authority.

The Trinidad and Tobago negotiating team at the preparatory meetings for the Arms Trade Treaty was comprised mainly of women. This approach was also duplicated in the national representation at 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 in September 2012.

While Trinidad and Tobago is located in a region that is not severely affected by armed conflict, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has become a significant casualty in the diversion of conventional arms in the Americas. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago faces numerous challenges with the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, with the consequential increase in armed violence within its borders.

To address this unfortunate development, the Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago spearheaded a number of initiatives to address the problem from a regional perspective. These efforts include, *inter alia*, hosting the following regional seminars and conferences on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, to provide disarmament and arms control training to security personnel including women:

- **July 2010**: UN-LiREC's Firearms Destruction and Stockpile Management Assistance Package for Caribbean State;
- **April 2011**: Sub-Regional Inter-Institutional Training Course in Combating Trafficking
in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives, hosted in collaboration with UNODA and UNLIREC;

- October 2011: Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives;
- April 2012: Sub-Regional Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC) for CARICOM Member States, hosted in collaboration with the UNODA;
- June 2012: Regional Round Table on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons through Strengthened Border Controls, held in collaboration with the Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand;
- March 2013: Bio Response Workshop organised in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Committee against Terrorism KICTE) which included women presenters, panellists and participants; and
- April 2013: Three(3)-day Workshop on the Implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1540, hosted in collaboration with the Committee pursuant to UNSC resolution 1540.

III:  Conclusion and the Way Forward

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the fulsome engagement of women, at all levels, in all aspects of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at both the domestic and international levels.

Trinidad and Tobago will continue to robustly support international and regional initiatives to advance these goals and encourages Member States to report on progress made in the field of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

In successive Substantive Sessions of the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) of the United Nations, Trinidad and Tobago further commits to continue to strengthen its resolution on "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".