
Caribbean Community and the United States Initiative to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons

Fact Sheet

**United States Department of State Office of the Spokesman
Washington, D.C., December 3, 2007**

Today, the U.S. and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries pledged to enhance regional cooperation to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the region. Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons poses a serious threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere because this thriving black market provides weapons to terrorist groups, drug traffickers, gangs, and other criminal organizations.

The initiative responds to the agreement between the CARICOM Foreign Ministers and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on March 22, 2006 calling for a partnership against the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and reaffirmed during the U.S. and CARICOM Summit during the June 2007 Conference on the Caribbean in Washington. The United States and CARICOM member states issued a regional initiative outlining concrete and practical measures they will undertake to address the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons throughout the region. The United States and CARICOM Member States urge other states in the hemisphere to join this effort.

Text of the Caribbean Community and United States Initiative

The Members States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the United States of America express their concern over the growing gray and black arms market in the hemisphere which has the potential to increase access by terrorist groups, drug traffickers, gangs, and other criminal organizations to these weapons. CARICOM Member States do not produce small arms, light weapons and ammunition, nor are they large scale importers of them.

As nations committed to the values of freedom, democracy, and peace, CARICOM Member States and the U.S. are extremely concerned about the illicit trafficking in small arms, light weapons and ammunition in the region which threatens the security of CARICOM Member States and impairs their economic and social development.

In light of their common values and concerns, CARICOM Member States and the U.S. declare their resolve to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms, light weapons and ammunition in the region. Building on their shared desire to protect their citizens and improve their ability to enjoy the benefits of democracy, security and development, CARICOM Member States and the U.S. resolve:

- To combat illicit arms trafficking relentlessly. They welcome the active and vigorous cooperation between CARICOM Member States and the U.S. to eradicate this problem and support enhanced efforts in this area.
- To support each others efforts as well as those of other states to combat this threat and where possible, to provide technical and other assistance to this end. They also pledge to exchange information and experiences so that they can benefit from each other's expertise in addressing this pressing security challenge. CARICOM Member States and the U.S. recognize that enhanced multilateral cooperation is essential because the arms trafficking threat transcends borders and affects all nations.

The Member States of the Caribbean Community reiterate their firm support of international treaties and instruments aimed at combating the illicit trade in small arms, light weapons, and

ammunition. In this regard they view the implementation of the *2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* as an important first step towards efforts to combat this deadly trade.

Drawing on their mutual vision of Inter-American security, and their joint objectives as democracies, CARICOM Member States and the U.S. agree to:

- Enhance import and export controls consistent with common international practices and standards
- Improve information sharing on entities and individuals involved in illicit trafficking and the routes they use to traffic arms
- Promote the tracing of firearms recovered in connection with illicit activities in order to provide investigative leads
- Deepen law enforcement and customs cooperation
- Enhance national stockpile control, management, and security practices
- Encourage destruction of at risk, obsolete, or excess national stockpiles
- Promote implementation of the OAS Guidelines on the control and security of man-portable air defense system (MANPADS)
- Provide technical and other assistance, as appropriate, to affected states to support their efforts to combat this threat
- Promote programs aimed at reducing the availability and use of illicit firearms

CARICOM Member States and the U.S. encourage states in the hemisphere to join in this effort to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms, light weapons and ammunition.