



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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Statement

By

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to the United Nations

At the

Open Ended Working Group Towards an Arms Trade Treaty

6th March, 2009

New York

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to align itself with the statements previously made by the delegations of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago on the present discussion.

Mr. Chairman, our delegation applauds the various contributions made in regard to the goals, objectives, scope, principles and parameters advanced so far for an Arms Trade Treaty. However, we are of the view that for an Arms Trade Treaty to be effective, it is essential that it receives the collective support of Member States.

For almost two decades, the structure of the arms trade has been significantly altered. The cross-border nature of the trade and its illicit aspects have challenged the ability of our governments to exercise due diligence in protecting the lives of our citizens. Too often, the ready availability of arms and ammunition to non-state actors has led to tragic results. The violence associated with the misuse of diverted arms in the Caribbean, and especially in my own country, has seriously impaired our poverty reduction initiatives and our overall socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has noted the interest expressed by other delegations for the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty to be limited to the categories of the UN Register. We wish to suggest that the scope be widened to include all types of conventional arms and related components. Our delegation has a particular interest in the inclusion of small arms and light weapons, and ammunition under this umbrella. We are also of the view that consideration should be given to existing control systems among Member States and regional bodies in our efforts to develop the scope of the treaty. Furthermore, we believe that the effectiveness of the treaty is contingent on the willingness of States to undertake their obligations under existing international instruments and international law. In this regard, we wish to cite *Article 51* of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, it is the view of the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines that all efforts must be made to prevent diversion of international legal arms transfers through illicit brokering; illegal re-export; unlicensed production; unlicensed transactions; and improper storage or transportation.

Mr. Chairman, the ability of all states to implement the provisions of a treaty is assured through international cooperation and assistance. Global trade needs global controls. The time to establish an effective international regime consisting of common standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is now.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.