SPECIAL DECLARATION ON ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Heads of State and Government of the Latin America and the Caribbean States gathered in Havana, Cuba, on the occasion of the II Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), on 28 and 29 January 2014,

1. Recall that illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is a problem linked to other illicit activities deeply affecting stability, exacerbating violence and insecurity and undermining respect for international law, causing a high number of deaths every year and absorbing significant resources that could be otherwise used for development;

2. Aware of the urgent need to prevent, combat, and eradicate illegal manufacturing of and illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, pledge to join efforts and use all possible resources to counteract such ignominious crime;

3. Also aware of the grave consequences for the life and health of our citizens and of the increasing investments by our States to take care, rehabilitate and adequately reinsert the victims of such criminal acts;

4. Recognize that in order to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, it is important to implement all relevant local, national, regional, and global instruments and mechanisms against illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, as a measure to strengthen the development and implementation of national legal regulations on the matter, bearing in mind the characteristics, scope and magnitude of the problem in each individual State;

5. Stress our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UNPOA) and recognize its significant contribution to efforts carried out on this matter. In this regard, we highlight the adoption by consensus of Resolution 68/48 entitled “The Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light
Weapons in All its Aspects” stressing the need for intensifying efforts not only to implement this Program, but also the “international Instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons” (ITI);

6. Further stress the need to continue multilateral efforts, in the framework of the UNPOA, in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, making progress in the adoption of legally binding instruments regarding marking, tracing and illicit brokering, in order to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market. We look forward to making progress on these issues during the Fifth Biennial Meeting of the UNPOA to be held in June, 2014 as well as in the review cycle of the Program of Action for 2014-2018;

7. Recognize the importance of discussing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders, in accordance with the Program of Action, and the need to promote cooperation in this field through the appropriate channels, with full respect for the sovereignty of each State over their borders;

8. Take note of the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly. We expect that this first legally binding instrument on arms trade can contribute to provide an effective response to the serious consequences of illicit trafficking and non-regulated trade in arms for many people and States, in particular through the diversion of arms to non-state actors or unauthorized users, often linked to transnational organized crime. We further hope that this Treaty may contribute to the prevention of armed conflicts, armed violence and violations of human rights and of the international humanitarian law. At the same time, and in anticipation of the entry into force of the Treaty, call for a balanced, transparent and objective implementation thereof and to respect the sovereign right of all States to ensure their legitimate defense, in conformity with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter;

9. In reaffirming the importance of regional and international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, we agree to establish a Working Group to study the crime of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition and submit a proposal for a mechanism and procedures enabling us to coordinate efforts in an effective manner, on the basis of full respect for International Law and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, in order to strengthen actions aimed at preventing and combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition for the sake of public safety;
10. For the purpose of establishing the abovementioned Working Group, we agree to communicate to the CELAC Pro Tempore Presidency, through the corresponding diplomatic channels, the appointment of the national delegates for this group, within a period of thirty days following the holding of this meeting.

Havana, January 29, 2014