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CARICOM: Working Together Toward Security A Brief by CITS Security Leadership Fellows – 2011

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The 15 member states of CARICOM face a number of daunting threats to their national security. These include: trafficking in drugs, small arms, and humans; domestic and transnational gang activities, piracy, and frequent natural disasters. This paper will analyze the intertwined nature of these security threats and what efforts CARICOM member states are making to overcome these challenges. The paper will assess the success of these efforts on the Caribbean region, and offer recommendations to complement existing joint initiatives and multilateral cooperation within CARICOM.

Drug and Arms Trafficking

The illegal trafficking of firearms and drugs carried out by domestic and transnational gangs is the leading cause of crime in CARICOM nations. The prevalence of firearms trafficking has increased in tandem with the growing drug trade, and as drugs flow north from the narcotic supplying countries of South America, firearms flow south from the United States.¹ According to the Association of Caribbean Police Chiefs, in 2010 there were approximately 1.6 million illegal firearms in CARICOM countries.² Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana in particular have experienced a marked increase in gang violence involving firearms.³ Of the 12,954 homicides committed over the last 10 years in Jamaica, 9,231 were committed with illegal firearms.⁴

According to the UNODC, the Caribbean has 30 homicides per 100,000 people, compared to 29 per 100,000 in Southern and Western Africa and 7 per 100,000 in North America.⁵ This is largely a product of the pervasive gang activities throughout the region. Perpetuated by lucrative drug and arms trafficking, local gangs have grown into transnational criminal syndicates and one of the Caribbean's most formidable security threats. Jamaica has approximately 202 gangs with 2,645 members which are responsible for 80% of homicides and other serious crimes. In Trinidad and

1 Tsvetkova, Bilyana. "Gangs in the Caribbean." (2009). *Harvard International Review*.

2 "Caribbean Leaders Focus on Stopping Illegal Weapons Trade." (2011). *Infosurhoy*. <http://www.infosurhoy.com/cocoon/saii/xhtml/en_GB/features/saii/features/main/2011/07/07/feature-02>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

3 Tsvetkova, Bilyana. "Gangs in the Caribbean." (2009). *Harvard International Review*.

4 Llewellyn, Paula V., Q.C. Director of Public Prosecutions, Jamaica. "Threat Convergence and Current Transnational Crime Trends a Caribbean Perspective: Focusing on Combating the Regional Rise in Gang Violence." (July 5, 2011). <eeas.europa.eu/us/.../paula_llewellyn_public_prosecutions_jamaica_en.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

5 "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean." (March, 2007). *UNDOC and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank*. <www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr_and_Vio_Car_E.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

Tobago, 80 gangs totaling 1,200 members are estimated to be responsible for the majority of crimes.⁶ Even in the Bahamas, which enjoys the highest GDP per capita among CARICOM countries, homicide rates are rising, and 44% of homicides can be attributed to drugs.^{7,8}

Given the geographic location of the Caribbean, between the cocaine suppliers of South America and cocaine consumers in North America and Europe, illegal drug trafficking requires constant policing and prevention. The total value of drug trafficking activities in the Caribbean is roughly 3.5% of the region's GDP.⁹ In 2007, traffickers moved an estimated 240 metric tons of cocaine through CARICOM countries into the U.S. and Europe.¹⁰ South American producers now export 844 tons of cocaine yearly, 16%, or approximately 135 tons, of which flows through the Caribbean.^{11,12} With continued U.S. pressure on Mexican drug routes, the amount of Caribbean trafficking is only expected to grow.

Stopping drug trafficking would lead to a reduction in crime and a consequent increase in measures of development. A study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank estimated that crime-related expenses (security costs, health care for victims of violent crime) cost between 2-4% of GDP in Caribbean nations.¹³ Private firms have reported adverse economic effects due to crime and subsequent security measures. In Jamaica, firms spent roughly 2% of revenue on security measures. Among small firms this number jumps to 17%. Reducing homicide rates even slightly could increase per capita income significantly. For reference, a small decrease in homicide rates to 10.6 in 100,000 would increase per capita income by 5.4% in Jamaica and Haiti and by 1.7% in Guyana. Economic losses from the drug trade are region-wide and are increasingly being felt outside of CARICOM. In the Dominican Republic, 47% of firms have reported lower productivity, and 57% report worsened access to financing directly due to crime-related problems.¹⁴

The Caribbean community has undertaken several multilateral cooperative initiatives to minimize the economic and security threats posed by drug trafficking and illicit arms trade. Together, the nations of the Caribbean seized 7.9 metric tons of cocaine and 46 metric tons of marijuana in 2008.¹⁵ Interdiction efforts in the Caribbean have reduced the share of cocaine going into North America from 43% to 12% in 6 years.¹⁶ Continued interdiction operations will likely perpetuate the downward

6 Llewellyn, Paula V., Q.C. Director of Public Prosecutions, Jamaica. "Threat Convergence and Current Transnational Crime Trends a Caribbean Perspective: Focusing on Combating the Regional Rise in Gang Violence." (July 5, 2011). <http://eeas.europa.eu/us/.../paula_llewellyn_public_prosecutions_jamaica_en.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

7 "Caribbean: GDP per Capita." *Global Property Guide*. Source: (2007) IMF World Economic Outlook Database. <<http://www.globalpropertyguide.com/Caribbean/gdp-per-capita/>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

8 Maura, Matt. "44% of Murders Committed in The Bahamas are Drug Related." (June, 9 2011). *The Eleutheran*. Bahamas Information Service. <<http://www.eleutheranews.com/national/1487.html>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

9 "A Caribbean Crime Wave: Crime Damages Society and the Economy." (2008). *The Economist*. <http://www.economist.com/node/10903343?story_id=10903343>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

10 Tsvetkova, Bilyana. "Gangs in the Caribbean." (2009). *Harvard International Review*.

11 "World Drug Report 2010." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. (2010). <http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

12 Johnson, Stephen C. (Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs). "Testimony on the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative: Choosing the Right Course before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere." (December 9, 2009). <<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/111/joh120909.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

13 "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean." (March, 2007). *UNODC and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank*.

14 "Crime and Security Task Force Report." (2007.) *CARICOM*. <www.caricom.org/jsp/.../crime_and_security_task_force_report_2002.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

15 "World Drug Report 2010." (2010). *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

16 "World Drug Report 2010." (2010). *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

trend in trafficking in the Caribbean. Multilateral arrangements such as the Santo Domingo Pact have helped efficiently distribute resources and intelligence to fight the flow of narcotics from South America. The Santo Domingo Pact and related Managua Mechanism (SDP/MM) deliver technical expertise to Central American and Caribbean nations to assist in drug control implementation. The computerized system developed for the SDP/MM will also serve as a data clearinghouse, allowing nations to coordinate interdiction activities.¹⁷ The SDP/MM can expand to coordinate drug eradication and trafficking interdiction operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

CARICOM Member States could undertake additional efforts to deter gang-initiated crime – whether perpetuated by arms or drug trafficking or both. These measures could include:

- i. More severe punishments for individuals who are associated with illegal activities involving guns, drugs, gangs, or a combination thereof.
- ii. A prisoner-trading program so that persons apprehended with known gang connections could be traded with similar prisoners from other states, thereby breaking up their respective criminal organizations.
- iii. Work programs specifically geared towards young males, to provide them skill sets to participate in society positively and mitigate economic incentives for crime.
- iv. Educational programs that target children at a very young age to teach them about dangers of drugs, orient them towards peaceful conflict resolution, and foster community affinity.

Maritime Piracy, Shipping and Port Security

As drugs and arms trafficking in the Caribbean basin becomes more lucrative, the flow of illegal shipments will surge. Fifty-one percent of all intercepted drug shipments in the Atlantic during 2006-2008 started their journey in Venezuela and moved through the Caribbean web of islands on the way to Europe.¹⁸ A further 11% of drug-related shipments originated in various Caribbean countries.¹⁹ Although difficult to contain, the illicit drug trade within the CARICOM member states can be greatly reduced by more stringent maritime security measures, as the relationship between the two go hand in hand. Maritime piracy also poses a security threat to the Caribbean Basin due to weak national capacities for maritime patrol. For instance, while some countries maintain small coastal patrol vehicles, several CARICOM countries such as Dominica, Grenada, and St. Kitts and Nevis do not have a single maritime patrol vessel.²⁰ The threat is further exacerbated by weak port security controls in the region.

According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), there were 40 reported acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Caribbean and South American coast in 2010.²¹ In July 2011, three armed

17 “Concept Note on the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism: A Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism for the Caribbean and Central America.” (2010). *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

18 “The Transatlantic Cocaine Market.” (2011). *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. <http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic_cocaine_market.pdf>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

19 Ibid.

20 Mitchell, Colin L. “Countering Maritime Terrorism in the Caribbean Sea And the Atlantic Ocean: Implications of Possible Maritime Terrorism in the Caribbean.” *U.S. Army Command and General Staff College*. 2007. <www.maritimeterrorism.com/.../countering-maritime-terrorism-in-the-caribbean-sea1.pdf>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

21 “Reports on Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2010.” *International Maritime Association*. (2011). <http://www.imo.org/OurWork/Security/PiracyArmedRobbery/Monthly%20and%20annual%20piracy%20and%20armed%20robbery%20report/169_



Coast guards from the Dominican Republic and Jamaica participating in the Tradewinds exercises, 2010, illustrating regional cooperation to increase regional security.

rebels attacked and robbed five fishing vessels off the coast of Guyana, an incident later connected to a series of high-sea robberies of 15 fishing boats that same weekend.²² Although the Caribbean does not suffer from rampant piracy similar to that seen off the Horn of Africa or the Gulf of Aden, widespread poverty and social unrest may lead to similar disastrous results.

Further, due to the large number of Western-flagged vessels in Caribbean waters, the region's proximity to the United States, its porous borders, and widespread poverty, economically vulnerable Caribbean states could become an attractive base for anti-Western Islamic militant groups. In 2007, Trinidadian authorities arrested four members of the Islamist extremist group Jamaat al-Muslimeen in connection to a terrorist plot to attack JFK airport in New York. If such groups choose to increase operations in the Caribbean, they will find little difficulty in exploiting the region's vulnerable ports and easy access to Western targets. More recently, in 2008, an al-Qaeda plot to attack a Caribbean cruise ship was revealed. Perpetrators had planned to use similar methods as those used in the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole*. Such incidents should serve as a forewarning of future terrorist activity in the area.²³

In July 2004, the IMO implemented the ISPS (International Ship and Port Security) code, a mechanism designed to evaluate risk and enhance the security of ships and ports.²⁴ Although ISPS standards are designed to protect and screen cargo at the ports, inadequate training for customs officers, poor port management standards, and a lack of maritime patrol vessels in the Caribbean continue to undermine port security.²⁵ According to the Jamaica Maritime Authority, it would take approximately \$500 million to implement the sufficient security equipment, infrastructure, and personnel training needed to secure Jamaican ports.²⁶

Despite their palpable inability to maintain adequate maritime and port security, several CARICOM states have undertaken efforts to fully accede to ISPS standards. In addition, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) provides maritime policing assistance through the Regional

Annual2010.pdf>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

22 "Guyana Links Piracy to Escaped Convicts." *DevSur: Focus on Suriname*. <<http://www.devsur.com/guyana-links-piracy-to-escaped-convicts/2011/07/03/>>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

23 "MI6 Said to Have Uncovered a Maritime Terrorism Plot in the Caribbean." *Maritime Terrorism Research Center*. (2008). <<http://www.maritimeterrorism.com/2008/06/15/mi6-said-to-have-uncovered-a-maritime-terrorism-plot-in-the-caribbean/>>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

24 "FAQ on ISPS Code and Maritime Security." *International Maritime Organization*. <http://www5.imo.org/SharePoint/mainframe.asp?topic_id=897>. (Accessed: August 31, 2011).

25 Edmunds, Anton. "Caribbean Maritime Economic Security Program." *Caribbean Central American Action*. (May 2009). <<http://www.c-cao.org/pdf/CARICOMMaritimeEconomicSecurityPresentation.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

26 Ward, Curtis. "Regional Threats: Security Capacity Imperatives in the Caribbean." *National Defense University*. (2010). <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-58/JFQ58_26-31_Ward.pdf>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

Security System (RSS), an organization created in 1982 to respond to national security threats in the Caribbean.²⁷ These maritime programs must be strengthened to ensure stronger compliance with ISPS regulations. Some suggestions in this regard include:

- i. development of regional standards for maritime and airport personnel training,
- ii. establishment of sufficient cargo screening methods at port facilities, and
- iii. establishment of a shared regional database to exchange information on ship registration, issued licenses, and boat tags.

Human Trafficking

As human trafficking has become the fastest growing transnational criminal industry in the world, the Caribbean community must make provisions to stem the flow of modern-day slaves in and out of the region. There are an estimated 250,000 people in forced labor in the Caribbean and Latin America regions, 43% of whom are forced into commercial sexual exploitation.²⁸ Five CARICOM states (Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia, and Suriname) were classified as Tier 2 in the U.S. State Department's "2011 Trafficking in Persons Report" for failing to comply with the minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, although each state was commended for making significant efforts to meet these standards.²⁹ Three CARICOM states were included on the Watch List (Bahamas, Barbados, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines), indicating that trafficking is increasing significantly or that the state's government is not making adequate efforts to combat trafficking.

Open borders, lax enforcement of entertainment visas and work permits, and legalized prostitution in the Caribbean contribute to its growing sex tourism industry. As a major transit point for forced laborers destined for Europe and North America, the Caribbean has attracted a number of transnational crime syndicates that disrupt regional stability, and there is increasing concern that terrorist groups will become attracted to the lucrative Caribbean slave trade just as they have been attracted towards the drug trade in Colombia and Tri-Border area (Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay).³⁰

Human trafficking, like drug and arms trafficking, promotes underground economy and violence. The networks and pathways used for trafficking humans are the same as those used for illicit arms and drug trafficking. Efforts to stem the increasing flow of forced laborers from southern Asia and Latin America to the Caribbean should cause these other underground industries to suffer.³¹ As many Caribbean states are tied in this network of source, transit, and destination countries, regional cooperation is imperative to resolve the issue.

27 Mitchell, Colin L. "Countering Maritime Terrorism in the Caribbean Sea And the Atlantic Ocean: Implications of Possible Maritime Terrorism in the Caribbean." *U.S. Army Command and General Staff College*. (2007). <www.maritimeterrorism.com/.../countering-maritime-terrorism-in-the-caribbean-sea1.pdf>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

28 "Human Trafficking: The Facts." *United Nations and Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking*. (2007). <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING_-_THE_FACTS_-_final.pdf>. (Accessed: September 5, 2011).

29 "Trafficking in Persons Report, 10th ed." *US State Department*. (2010). <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/>>. (Accessed: September 5, 2011).

30 Seelke, Claire Ribando. "Trafficking in Persons In Latin America and the Caribbean." (January 4, 2011). <http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33200_20110104.pdf>. (Accessed: September 5, 2011).

31 "Increase in human trafficking from India to Caribbean: IOM." (full form). *United Nations News & Media*. (2011). <<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2011/08/iom-highlights-increase-in-trafficking-from-india-to-caribbean/>>. (Accessed: September 5, 2011).

Natural Disasters

The Caribbean is one of the most disaster prone regions in the world, and is home to “the top ten countries by number of disasters per land area and per head of population.”³² Economic growth, coastline development, and overall urban expansion have only amplified the destructive potential of natural disasters in recent years. Economic development over the past few decades, for instance, has led to the urbanization of 75% of the region.³³ As Caribbean states have heavily agricultural economies and rely on tourism for 14.2% of their annual GDP, or US\$48.6 billion, natural disasters can be devastating to these states.³⁴ During 1970-1999, total economic losses to the region due to natural disasters ranged between \$700 million and \$3.3 billion annually, the cumulative damages equivalent to 43.3% of the region’s total GDP for 1998.³⁵

Natural disasters routinely cause the loss of essential infrastructure such as telecommunications, civil defense mechanisms, and government services, and thus hinder CARICOM member states’ security capacity. Natural disasters are one of the main reasons why the GDP of Caribbean states are so unstable.³⁶ Funds often destined for security and development are often diverted to compensate for disaster losses.³⁷

The threat of natural disasters is higher now than ever, making regional preparedness an absolute priority. Evidence suggests the likelihood of a steady increase in natural disasters in the future: the 1990’s reportedly recorded three times more natural disasters than the 1970’s.³⁸ Additionally, man-made disasters such as oil spills, mining accidents, and transportation accidents have also seen a steady rise over the past 30 years.

Strengthening regional disaster response and preparedness capacity is absolutely crucial for CARICOM’s development and security goals. Some suggestions for this include:

- i. Conducting preparation and mitigation efforts at the sub-regional level to ensure cohesion between local, state, and regional level agencies. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency’s civilian corps program is a successful example. It represents a leap forward in bottom up mitigation by incorporating civilians into local disaster response and training.³⁹

32 “Caribbean Region: Regional Strategy and Regional Indicative Program 2008-2013.” *European Community*. (2008). <http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/scanned_r9CARAI_rsp-2007-2013_en.pdf>. (Accessed: August 30, 2011).

33 Charvériat, Céline. “Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Overview of Risk.” (Working Paper No. 434). *Inter-American Development Bank*. (October 2000). <<http://www.iadb.org/resht/publications/pubfiles/pubWP-434.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

34 “Key Facts at a Glance.” *World Travel and Tourism Council*. (2011). <http://www.wttc.org/eng/Tourism_Research/Economic_Research/Regional_Reports/Caribbean/>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

35 Ibid.

36 Rasmussen, Tobias N. “Macroeconomic Implications of Natural Disasters in the Caribbean.” (Working Paper No. 224). *International Monetary Fund*. (December 2004). <<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2004/wp04224.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

37 Johnson, Stephen C. (Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs). “Testimony on the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative: Choosing the Right Course before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.” (December 9, 2009). <<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/111/joh120909.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 28, 2011).

38 Rasmussen, Tobias N. “Macroeconomic Implications of Natural Disasters in the Caribbean.” (Working Paper No. 224). *International Monetary Fund*. (December 2004). <<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2004/wp04224.pdf>>. (Accessed: August 25, 2011).

39 *Promoting “the enhancement of community resilience in CDERA states/territories to mitigate and respond to the adverse effects of climate change and disasters.”* Pursuant to the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Programming Framework, Priority Outcome Three. <http://www.cdema.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=476&Itemid=303>. (Accessed: September 5, 2011).

- ii. Developing a safety-conscious culture to strengthen existing institutional capacity, bolster risk reduction and facilitate cooperative intra-regional disaster response.⁴⁰

Terrorism and Non-Proliferation

The same gaps in security that are taken advantage of by criminal elements could also be seized upon by international terrorist organizations. Although CARICOM states may not be considered targets of terrorism, high valued “Western” targets do exist within CARICOM states borders, i.e. tourists, resorts, cruise ships, and business interests.⁴¹ In addition, the lax security could result in CARICOM states being used as staging grounds for acquisition operations, for assembling of components, or as transshipment point for WMD and dual use items.

The security gaps among CARICOM states and the greater Latin American region could foster the area as a staging ground or transshipment point for WMD assembly or other terrorist attacks. Asher Karni’s proliferation network, which used “ghost” hospitals to export oscilloscopes and triggered sparks gaps from the United States to Pakistan via South Africa, illustrates the ability of non-state actors to use unsuspecting states as transit states for dual-use items.⁴² Similarly, the A.Q. Khan network established a locally owned factory in Malaysia to produce centrifuge parts that were later exported to Libya.⁴³

In light of these examples from other regions, combined with the lack of strategic trade controls and weak border security, it is not hard to imagine that CARICOM states will become attractive to proliferation networks – either for the assembly of WMD’s or for the re-export of dual-use items to proliferators around the world.

Initiatives to meet these challenges should include:

- i. More focus on establishing strategic trade controls, including laws and national control lists
- ii. Increased border security capabilities, including induction of radiation detecting devices
- iii. Training of customs and border security officials to identify controlled items
- iv. Participation in enforcement-related programs such as Container Security Initiative and Proliferation Security Initiative.

40 “Recommendation 4.10.5 Priority For Action 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.” (2011). *Caribbean Implementation of The Hyogo Framework For Action: Mid-Term Review*. Disaster Risk Reduction Center, University of the West Indies & United Nations Development Programme 2011.

41 Rosand, Eric. “Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the Latin America and Caribbean Region.” *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation*. (September 2008).

42 “Online NewsHour: Cape Town Businessman Will Be Sentenced, Pakistani Businessman Sought by U.S. Government in Nuclear Smuggling Case.” (July 26, 2005). *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/july-dec05/nukes_7-26.html>. (Accessed: September 14, 2011).

43 Spillius, Alex. “Malaysia investigates links with Libya arms programme.” (6 February 2004). *The Telegraph (UK)*. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/1453639/Malaysia-investigates-links-with-Libya-arms-programme.html>>. (Accessed: September 15, 2011).

Conclusion

Because of its geographical location, the Caribbean is prone to natural disasters. Although a less conventional threat to regional security, natural disasters have a tremendous ability to inflict economic damage on CARICOM states by diverting human, financial, and technical resources away from economic development and national security. Rather than focusing on impending natural disasters, CARICOM states are actively pursuing multilateral strategies to mitigate the damage to life and infrastructure they cause.

A similar, non-fatalistic approach is needed by CARICOM to face another product of its geographical location: porous maritime borders. Much of the trafficking in small arms, drugs, and humans is done via cargo shipments. Proliferation and terrorism experts fear that the networks used by arms, drugs and human traffickers can also be used to traffic dual-use items, making maritime security critical to the security of the region.

All 15 CARICOM member states face similar threats, and share the same resource constraints. Therefore, they should actively pursue regional solutions: (a) to use their scarce resources more efficiently and (b) to close administrative and enforcement loopholes across national systems that criminals are able to exploit.

A number of efforts and frameworks have already been put into place and appear to be working effectively in several member states. Further efforts in this regard could include:

- i. Harmonizing laws, regulations, and penalties regarding possession, transfer, use and trade in narcotics and small arms;
- ii. Harmonizing laws, regulations, and penalties regarding activities considered criminal, such as gang-activity, trafficking in persons, money-laundering, terrorism, and WMD-proliferation;
- iii. Developing common lists of controlled items, whether these are controlled for reasons of public health, environmental safety, national security, or WMD proliferation. This will ensure that criminals would not be able to exploit the differences among national lists and enforcement officials would be similarly empowered to curtail transfers of these items across the region.
- iv. Establishing databases on criminal activities, persons, and groups, to share enforcement information across the region.
- v. Establishing regional mechanisms to invite, coordinate and take advantage of external assistance in capacity building.
- vi. Developing the capacity to identify how such external assistance can be utilized and channeled to meet more than one regional need.

