



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF  
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



**FIRST COMMITTEE  
THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Our region attaches tremendous importance to this agenda item because it addresses a fundamental and essential aspect of our disarmament agenda: nuclear weapons.

I would like to express appreciation for the comprehensive briefing and information provided by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the other High Level Officials on the “Current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organisations with mandates in this field”.

CARICOM also aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

CARICOM has had a longstanding policy of total elimination of nuclear weapons, in line with the three pillars of the Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), namely disarmament, non-proliferation and guarantees for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and with respect to Article VI of the Non-proliferation Treaty.

We have arrived at this position, conscious of the deleterious humanitarian and other devastating impacts which nuclear weapons can and have had on humankind. It is for this reason that we have sought to engage on the matter in various UN fora, because we are convinced of the gravity of the situation and the need for urgent action to be taken to ensure that nuclear weapons do not remain a feature of our global security landscape.

Our interest is fuelled by the reality of our strategic location, porous borders and socio-economic realities, which could potentially make us soft targets for nuclear terrorism. Consequently, while we present a negligible threat as non-producers of weapons-related dual use technologies, we are ever mindful of threat for national, regional and international peace and security if nuclear weapons continue to be retained and relied upon by those who possess them as control of their strategic posture.

As a region, we have long argued that nuclear weapons provide a false sense of security. They are not effective tools for deterrence as, on the contrary, they encourage some non-nuclear-weapon states to alter their nuclear status. Rather than making this world a better, safer place they instead heighten global security risks and raise serious and increase the likelihood that they could fall into the wrong hands. For us, therefore, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons remain a grave threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Chair,

It is against this background that we have lamented the limited progress made in addressing nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that more has to be done to fill the legal gap that currently exists for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. As a group, we have been dismayed by the reluctance of nuclear weapon states to fulfil their moral obligation towards advancing the common objective of nuclear disarmament.

The reluctance of some states to become States Parties to the NPT and the inability of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to arrive at a consensus outcome document, point to the fragility of the current mechanisms at our disposal and the potential for even greater instability.

It is equally disconcerting that 20 years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to enter into force, despite having been ratified by a total of 166 member states. We, therefore, urge the 8 remaining Annex 2 States to complete the steps necessary for their signature or ratification. We must awaken to the reality that we simply cannot continue to operate as business as usual. The status quo must be changed and it must be changed with a level of consciousness that is commensurate with the unstable and conflict ridden global environment in which we currently reside.

It is this reality that has consumed our attention and given us cause for concern. The dynamics of the global security environment have changed radically and dramatically in recent years. The challenges posed by non-state actors and the heightened risk of their gaining access to nuclear related materials, have reinforced our conviction that we must, as an international community, do more to ensure that we achieve the goal of complete nuclear disarmament. For us, such an objective is not merely a lofty ideal. It is grounded in the belief that with the requisite political will and determination, we can make progress in meeting the obligations contained in the NPT by injecting new life into a process that has been dysfunctional for far too long.

Mr. Chair,

A key element of the process going forward will be to revamp the disarmament machinery. It must be emboldened and strengthened so that faith and confidence in the international community's ability to address nuclear weapons can be engendered. For too long, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not been able to function as envisaged. Such a situation is untenable. Consequently, CARICOM urges members of the CD to continue to adopt a work programme that will enable it to discharge the mandate which it has been given.

The challenges being faced by the CD should not force us to retreat or shy away from finding additional methods through which the objective of nuclear disarmament can be pursued. On the contrary, it should strengthen our resolve to find new and creative ways of complementing the existing mechanisms at our disposal. This firm belief has led CARICOM countries to warmly and fully endorse the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to create such a working group with a mandate to, inter alia, effectively address legal measures, provisions aimed at achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. We are especially pleased that the Working Group was able to meet throughout 2016, and welcome the report emanating from its third and final formal session in August 2016, and the recommendations contained therein.

In the same vein, we believe that whereas the UN Disarmament Commission should continue to play a key role in discussions on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation, it must overcome the paralysis that has prevented it from reaching agreement on the items on its agenda.

Like other delegations, CARICOM also joins the call for the General Assembly to convene a fourth special session on disarmament that would, among other things, provide for a comprehensive consideration and review of all issues in the field of disarmament and international security, including measures for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that "the elimination of nuclear weapons would free up vast amounts of resources that could be used to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Reports of up to US \$300 million a day being spent on nuclear weapons as so many people go hungry, speak to the extent to which our priorities as a global community have become highly skewed and misplaced.

Mr. Chair,

CARICOM is proud to have been associated with the first nuclear weapon free zone, in a highly populated area, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which in turn established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). We are pleased that the Latin American and the Caribbean region was at the forefront of this initiative that has since witnessed the creation of similar nuclear weapon free zones in other parts of the world. While not a substitute for efforts that need to be advanced to ban nuclear weapons, these zones have been central to reinforcing and underlining the important commitment and obligations that we have to nuclear disarmament. We, therefore, continue to be concerned that there has been no progress in having such a zone created in the Middle East. We believe that the time is ripe for clear and decisive action to be taken in this regard.

Our efforts at playing our part in combating nuclear weapons are bolstered by the support received by entities like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The invaluable work of the Agency and its centrality in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and the application of safeguards regime for verification, safety and security cannot be overemphasized.

Consequently, CARICOM has been steadily increasing its presence and participation in the work of the IAEA, and is looking to deepen the level of cooperation that currently exists. We are heartened to hear that the Agency is itself constantly reviewing how it can further streamline its work in support of the broader disarmament and development agenda.

CARICOM is also pleased with the work that has been undertaken in the context of the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which affirms that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The region has been active participants in and beneficiaries of work undertaken throughout Latin America and the Caribbean aimed at ensuring that we remain faithful to our obligations under the resolution. We wish to publicly acknowledge and thank the CARICOM Regional Coordinator for 1540 for his unwavering commitment in this regard. In view of the importance attached to this resolution, CARICOM will be closely following the on-going review, of the Committee established to monitor the implementation of obligations under resolution 1540.

The outcome of this comprehensive review is a significant interest to CARICOM Member States, as its findings will be fundamental to guiding our implementation activities over the next two years.

One particular area in which we continue to have a special interest is that of the transboundary movement of hazardous waste and radioactive materials. As small island developing states whose livelihood, as well as economic and environmental sustainability are integrally linked to the Caribbean Sea, we continue to be concerned about the movement of such materials, notwithstanding the mechanisms in place to enhance cooperation in the area of nuclear radiation, transport and waste safety.

Mr. Chair,

In closing may I stress the view of CARICOM Member States that the international community has an obligation to ensure that nuclear weapons become a thing of the past. We are committed to playing our part in support of this agenda. We encourage others to join us in doing likewise so that we can create an enabling environment for this and future generations.