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STATEMENT

by

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**of the Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
to the United Nations**

on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

on

Agenda Item 83

“The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels”

in the Sixth Committee (Legal Committee)

**69th Regular Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

United Nations, New York
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements delivered by Costa Rica on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

CARICOM looks forward to fruitful discussions in the Sixth Committee on upholding and promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, with a view to concluding a comprehensive resolution on the same.

Mr. Chairman,

As enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the rule of law establishes conditions under which justice and respect for law can be maintained.

CARICOM underscores that a rules-based international system with clear and predictable rules, which apply equally to all Member States, is an essential precondition for the achievement of lasting peace and security, protection of human rights, sustained economic development, social progress and the advancement of all peoples.

To this end, CARICOM underscores the need for the universal adherence to, and implementation of, the rule of law at the national and international levels.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reaffirms its continued commitment and support for the work of the United Nations to strengthen the rule of law through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to Member States. We welcome, in particular, additional initiatives aimed at providing training and education in the area of international law, especially to developing countries.

An important aspect of this capacity building work is undertaken through the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. It is a prime example of the commitment of the United Nations to the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels. CARICOM therefore wishes to reiterate its call for this Programme to be strengthened through funding from the regular budget. The current situation, based on a system of voluntary contributions, was never contemplated when the programme began its operations, and undermines the effectiveness of this important programme.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary General for his comprehensive annual report, on strengthening and coordinating the rule of law activities of the United Nations (A/69/181), which provides a useful update on the achievements and challenges of the United Nations in its efforts to strengthen the rule of law over the past year.

CARICOM echoes the sentiment of the United Nations, that everyone, from the individual right up to the State itself, is accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated. In this regard, CARICOM underscores its strong opposition to impunity, which is contrary to the rule of law, at both the domestic and international levels.

The Caribbean Community was founded based on principles of democracy, liberty and the rule of law. The fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual are protected and entrenched in the constitutions of our Member States. Our legal systems also incorporate provisions relating to equality before the law. Moreover, these are buttressed by various international treaties and conventions that promote the rule of law, of which CARICOM States are signatories.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of promoting the rule of law at the international level, we wish to commend the efforts of the United Nations, as noted in the Report of the Secretary General (A/69/181), in supporting the growing network of international treaties and international dispute resolution mechanisms. As a region which is disproportionately affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we look forward to the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014. We see the implementation of this instrument as a key pillar of our collective undertaking as the international community seeks to bring about an end to impunity through the promotion of the rule of law at both the national and international levels, in a manner consistent with our obligations to protect human rights and uphold international humanitarian law.

In the same vein, CARICOM welcomes the growing number of ratifications for the Kampala Amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the crime of aggression. We reiterate our call on all States Parties to the Rome Statute to ratify the Kampala Amendment so that it may enter into force by 2017.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM looks forward to beginning work on an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It is our considered view, that the promotion of the rule of law at the international level must also lay the foundation for the achievement of sustainable development and the protection and sustainable management of the common heritage of mankind for present and future

generations. As a group of countries from a region that is highly vulnerable to the unprecedented rate of loss of marine biodiversity and the impacts of unsustainable practices on the marine environment, in particular, as it relates to activities that are conducted in marine ecosystems beyond areas of national jurisdiction, we see the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address these matters as inextricably linked to our pursuit of justice and fairness for all.

CARICOM also commends the continued work of the International Law Commission on the progressive development and codification of international law. We will speak more specifically on this matter under the agenda item for the ILC.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM applauds the efforts of the Rule of Law Unit which was established by the Secretary General to assist States with capacity building. To this end, we welcome further dialogue and cooperation with this Unit to promote of the rule of law at the international level.

We also wish to commend the work of the United Nations in the areas of constitution-making and legal reform, strengthening of judicial systems, combating corruption and enhancing the State capacity to implement their human rights commitments. CARICOM is of the view that independent, unbiased and competent legal and judicial systems are the backbone of the rule of law.

As was noted in the report of the Secretary General to the First Committee contained in document (A/69/1), *"The global security environment in which the United Nations operates continues to exhibit worrying trends. Security threats have become more complex, with the use of unconventional tactics and often direct attacks against civilians and the United Nations..."* This places into context the importance of all efforts at the promotion of the rule of law at all levels.

As such, CARICOM wishes to reiterate, in line with Resolution 68/116, that universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at both the national and international levels, along with principles of justice, are fundamental to the peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to working closely with the United Nations, as well as with our regional and hemispheric partners, to ensure greater adherence to the rule of law at the national and international levels. We underline the fundamental importance of the rule of law to the development of the three main pillars upon which the United Nations is built: peace and security, human rights and development.

I thank you.