



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

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY E. COURTENAY RATTRAY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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



THEMATIC DEBATE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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

NEW YORK, 19TH OCTOBER, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

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

As States which subscribe fully to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to today's discussion on nuclear weapons at this historic 70th session of the Committee. We do so mindful of the fact that seventy years ago the world witnessed the horrific bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with it the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We are also reminded that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and of the threat they pose to humanity has been a fundamental goal of the United Nations since its founding. Sadly, however, this remains an elusive goal.

We reiterate our firm view that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Paradoxically, these weapons are of no use in addressing contemporary security threats. They serve no purpose in combating transnational organised crime, preventing terrorism, violent extremism and curbing cyber warfare. Rather, they breed a climate of insecurity that heightens the risks of proliferation. Moreover, their existence and threatened use cedes the moral high ground to rogue States and non-State actors that seek a convenient argument to excuse their own excesses.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM States have been ardent supporters of the NPT; we are committed to its full and effective implementation and to its universality. Indeed, we view the near universality of the NPT, with 191 States Parties, as a powerful reflection of our collective commitment to eliminate the spread and use of nuclear weapons. We continue to call on the small number of States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty and place their facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

CARICOM laments the fact that forty-five years after the entry into force of the NPT and twenty-five years after its indefinite extension, the international community is still unable to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. We have witnessed the growing discord that continues to stymie efforts to meet our shared nuclear disarmament obligations. This was most recently evidenced by the inability of the 2015 Review Conference to reach agreement on the final draft document.

There is a growing and palpable sense of dissatisfaction among most non-nuclear weapon States with the failure of the nuclear weapons States to live up to their obligations to implement the nuclear disarmament provisions contained in Article VI of the Treaty. This sense

of frustration is further exacerbated by the fact that one of the key demands by non-nuclear weapon States parties, concerning the pledge that non-nuclear weapons

States would not be the target of the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons states, has still not been placed in a legally binding form. Instead, nuclear modernization programmes continue apace and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence persists, thereby providing pernicious and malign incentives for proliferation.

We reject the faulty logic that underpins the Cold War deterrence framework. We agree with those that note that any peace created by deterrence is akin to a peace that exists between two persons pointing guns to each other's heads with their fingers on the triggers. This scenario reflects an unstable, tense peace that is fraught with danger and prone to miscalculation.

We cannot continue to ignore these realities, which serve to undermine the efficacy of the NPT. It is past time for us to pursue our legal undertaking to advance the effective measures called for in Article VI of the Treaty. We must start the discussions as a matter of urgency. We therefore welcome the initiative for the convening of an Open-Ended Working Group to negotiate concrete legal effective measures to advance our common nuclear disarmament goals.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM States have joined efforts to place humanitarian concerns at the forefront of the discourse and action on nuclear weapons, including its inclusion on the agenda of the First Committee. As Small Island Developing States, we view the prospects of a nuclear detonation, whether by design or accident, as an existential horror that could decimate the entire region. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact and the long term consequences on public health, food security, social services, infrastructure, environmental assets and the psychological well-being of our citizens.

We are also gravely concerned about the possibility that these weapons could be used by nation States, or illegally transferred and acquired by terrorist groups and other non-state actors. We reiterate the endorsement by our Heads of State and Government at the CELAC Summit this January of the pledge made at the Vienna Conference in December 2014, to fill the legal gap related to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this connection, we underscore the pressing need for the negotiation and adoption of a universally and legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, while taking full account of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is embodied in the participation of all its Member States in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first

nuclear weapon free zone in a densely populated region. It is a source of immense satisfaction to CARICOM states that this Treaty enjoys universal adherence throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It has served our region well by contributing to the strengthening of regional security and has been a model for the establishment of other such zones. Building on this, Heads of State and Government of CELAC reaffirmed and designated the region as a Zone of Peace in January 2014.

CARICOM States have long recognized the important role that nuclear-weapon- free zones can play in strengthening regional and international security, not least through confidence-building. We reaffirm that nuclear-weapon-free zones must be respected by all States, without any reservations and limitations.

CARICOM States believe that a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will go a far way towards reducing tensions in the region. We therefore reiterate our call for the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

The elimination of the testing of nuclear weapons remains a critical element in the overall process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. To this end, we urge ratification of the CTBT by the eight remaining Annex II States to enable its entry into force. Pending this, all States should continue to abide by a moratorium on testing. For us in the CARICOM region, the CTBT is not only an instrument aimed at promoting the disarmament agenda, but one which has tremendous capacity, through the CTBTO's programme of assistance, to develop capacity in the areas of seismography and early warning signals to detect earthquakes and tsunamis.

A ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is an important objective for an effective disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are therefore pleased to receive the report of the Group of Governmental Experts with recommendations on steps to advance the FMCT negotiations and call for negotiations to begin at the earliest opportunity.

CARICOM States recognize and underscore the right of all states to peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. At the same time, we insist that this right must take place in full compliance with the safeguard provisions of the IAEA. The role of the IAEA in providing the necessary monitoring and verification should be fully respected and strengthened.

CARICOM attaches significant importance to the work of the IAEA in the promotion of safeguard applications for the peaceful uses of technology. The strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities remains important to us. We maintain a strong interest in the IAEA programmes, designed to enhance the use of nuclear technology in advancing human and social development and aiding economic progress.

In 2014 CARICOM launched its Nonproliferation for Development Initiative (NDI). Under this Initiative, CARICOM is exploring a range of new programmes with the IAEA, primarily aimed at improving food security and attending to important ecological concerns, such as ocean acidification. In addition, we continue to cooperate with the IAEA on issues relating to the safe transportation of radioactive materials, given the fundamental importance of these materials to healthcare and to industry in general. Our national capabilities in the areas of nuclear science, medical physics and water resources have been boosted through the technical assistance of the IAEA by way of knowledge transfer and capacity building.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM States are particularly committed to the issue of nuclear safety. The most important nuclear safety issue for CARICOM States remains the trans-boundary movement of radioactive materials. The transshipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea, and the concomitant threat to the environment and economic sustainability of Small Island Developing States of the region remains of grave concern.

While we are cognizant of the mechanisms in place to enhance cooperation in the area of nuclear radiation, transport and waste safety, we are mindful that emergency preparedness and response mechanisms are limited in their capacity to respond adequately and effectively to a nuclear accident or incident.

I thank you.