



STATEMENT

by

**H.E. AMBASSADOR EDEN CHARLES,
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
AGENDA ITEMS (ITEMS 88 TO 105)**

**United Nations, New York
October 08, 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community ("CARICOM") on Agenda Items 88 to 105 - All Disarmament and International Security Agenda Items.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM extends its congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the First Committee during this landmark 70th Session of the General Assembly. We also offer our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election. Please be assured of CARICOM's full support as you embark on your Chairmanship.

Permit us also, Mr. Chairman, to express our appreciation to your predecessor for his stewardship during his tenure as Chair of the First Committee during the 69th Session.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement ("NAM") and the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States ("CELAC").

Mr. Chairman,

A few days ago, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - the overarching framework which will guide global development for the next fifteen years. CARICOM echoes the words of the Secretary General that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda "*encompasses a universal, transformative and integrated agenda that heralds an historic turning point for our world.*"

We are of the view that the First Committee has a fundamental role to play in assisting States to achieve the SDGs, particularly Goal 16 - *the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development*. This is because we are ever mindful that the primary responsibility of the United Nations is "*the maintenance of international peace and security.*"

Mr. Chairman,

Our debate comes amidst a time when peace and security are absent from so many parts of the world. This is a matter of grave concern 70 years after the establishment of the United Nations.

The international community has been forced to acknowledge within recent times, that the constantly changing global security architecture has rendered no State or group of States, big or small, immune from the effects of international terrorism, the increasing influence of non-state actors, new proliferation threats and the escalation of strife and conflict between States.

Consequently, CARICOM encourages all States to act consistently within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations on all matters related to disarmament and international security and to enforce decisions which are taken. This is essential if we are to effectively respond to the new and emerging security challenges in this century.

Mr. Chairman,

Trans-boundary criminal activities pose the greatest threats to the security of our sub-region. These threats include, but are not restricted to - illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and ammunition, money laundering, cyber-crime.

In this regard, CARICOM has devised a mechanism, articulated in the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015-2019 to build resilience in the face of these clear and present dangers. The Specific Crime and Security Strategy approved by Heads of Government in 2013 has as its goal to *"significantly improve citizen security by creating a safe, just and free Community, while simultaneously improving the economic viability of the Region."*

Mr. Chairman,

The illicit arms trade has resulted in an increase in homicide rates across the region. Statistics reveal that approximately seventy per cent (70%) of murders in CARICOM occur through the use of small arms.

It has also exacerbated the incidence of gang related violence in some of our capitals. These activities undermine our socio-economic development as very valuable financial and other resources in our national budgets have to be set aside to tackle this scourge.

Although we have crafted a regional solution to tackle these problem, we are all cognizant of the need for cooperation at the multilateral level and that is why CARICOM States subscribe fully to the object and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty and are moving assiduously towards the full implementation of the ATT in our jurisdictions.

We remain firm in our conviction that the ATT can contribute significantly to reducing the suffering of many of our citizens and countless people around the world, especially women and children, who are living daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms.

But at the same time, we also acknowledge that for the ATT to be a universal success, it must be implemented in full and in good faith by all States Parties including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons.

At the same, Mr. Chairman,

We have found non-binding legal agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. CARICOM once more wishes to reiterate the importance we place on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN-POA) as an important instrument in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In this regard, we are of the view that the UN-POA should be strengthened and therefore look forward to actively participating in the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (BMS6) in June 2016. It is our hope that

this meeting will provide a platform to achieve clear and tangible results which could be achieved by the 2018 Third Review Conference.

For us, BMS6 must have as one of its major outcomes, a mechanism for strengthening international assistance and cooperation as well as the sharing of best practices.

We also continue to embrace within our region, the support provided by regional United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC). This organization has supported and assisted Member States of CARICOM in capacity building measures and technical assistance programmes and we look forward to continued collaboration with UN-LiREC.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM welcomed the observance of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on September 26 of this year. As an international community, we must recognize that the world has not been engulfed in a nuclear war in the 70 years of existence of the United Nations.

CARICOM wishes to reiterate that the utilization of the nuclear option would have more severe humanitarian and other consequences for peoples of the world, which would be more deleterious than what was observed in 1945. In this regard, we reiterate our call for the denuclearization of all regions of the world and are proud that CARICOM belongs to a region which established the first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone pursuant to the Treaty of Tlateloco.

CARICOM holds firmly to the view that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitute a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Additionally Mr. Chairman, we, as firm believers in the rule of law, reiterate that Treaty obligations are sacred and must be carried out fully and effectively. Consequently, we request all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ("NPT") to honour their obligations which flow from this Instrument.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, CARICOM views the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty ("CTBT") as a complementary instrument to the NPT as it provides the last and most visible barrier against nuclear weapons testing. We continue to urge ratification by the remaining Annex II countries to enable its early entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

We lament the fact that forty-five years since the Treaty on the NPT entered into force, the international community is still unable to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. We have witnessed the discord which continues to haunt nuclear disarmament through the inability of the 2015 Review Conference to reach agreement on the final draft document.

CARICOM considers the outcome from 2015 NPT RevCon to be the Humanitarian Pledge, which represents a commitment of more than 100 States to work for the prohibition and

elimination of nuclear weapons. CARICOM is proud to be counted among those who support this initiative.

We welcome growing global attention to this matter, including through Conferences which took place in Norway in 2013, and Mexico and Austria in 2014. We look forward to future meetings on this issue and reiterate the call for a Treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM restates its strong opposition to the shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. The Caribbean Sea and its living and non-living resources contribute significantly to the economic and social development of our peoples. This activity continues to pose a threat to the security, viability and the sustainable development of the region and is in contradiction with the Caribbean Sea as a peaceful zone.

Consequently, we call on all States involved to put measures in place to discontinue this practice and would urge them to act responsibly and to engage in dialogue with CARICOM Member States within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (“IAEA”).

Mr. Chairman, CARICOM’s long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction (“WMDs”) has been underscored by our ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons (“CWC”), and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons (“BWC”).

CARICOM benefitted from the support of the IAEA in strengthening our capacity through the sharing of best practices and transfer of technology; from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (“OPCW”) in providing specialized training in emergency response to deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents; and from UNODA and the BWC Implementation Support Unit, to improve detection and diseases surveillance capabilities in the region.

At the same time we are pleased with the efforts of the CARICOM Regional Coordinator for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540, in his efforts to sensitize CARICOM on responses to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear and Explosive (“CBRNE”) emergencies.

Finally Mr. Chairman, the Caribbean Community is acutely aware that its sustainable development is inextricably linked to the safety and security of its peoples.

During the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations, the First Committee has another opportunity to engage in progressive dialogue and to begin meaningful negotiations on the disarmament and non-proliferation agendas.

Future generations will look back on this 70th Anniversary of the United Nations and apply this period in history as a yardstick to measure progress, specifically as it relates to global peace and security and will judge the decisions made by this Committee.

CARICOM is of the view that all Member States should seize the opportunity to renew their pledge to work with the United Nations in realizing to the fullest extent one of the founding principles of as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, that of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Let us demonstrate the necessary political will to create a peaceful and secure international environment for future generations.

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you.