
**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



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STATEMENT

by

**MS. CHARLENE ROOPNARINE
FIRST SECRETARY**

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
(Items 93 to 108)**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
OCTOBER 15, 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation associates with the statement delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the statement delivered on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Mr. Chairman,

For Trinidad and Tobago, disarmament is about preventing and eliminating violence, supporting sustainable development and upholding the principles of humanity. For my delegation, there is a direct correlation between disarmament and development, and therefore our commitment to disarmament is anchored within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Approximately seventy percent of murders committed in the CARICOM sub-region are perpetrated by the use of handguns. These weapons are the arms of choice and are a key driver of armed violence, inclusive of gang violence and organized crime. Trinidad and Tobago is particularly affected by this unrelenting scourge of gun violence which continue to be a malignancy in our society. The control, prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in these armaments is a top priority for my country and for our regional partners. Trinidad and Tobago therefore considers 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”) an important instrument in harnessing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In this connection, we welcome the Outcome Document of the recently concluded Third Review Conference of the POA as it represents a progressive step in addressing the issues of critical importance in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation is pleased with the inclusion of ammunition in the outcome document and views this as a significant step forward from a substantive perspective. For years, many States including Trinidad and Tobago, have advanced that any discourse on the illicit use of small arms and light weapons is deficient without references to ammunition. We are therefore satisfied with its inclusion in the RevCon3 outcome document and remain optimistic that the international community would eventually be able to reach consensus with respect to addressing ammunition in a comprehensive manner within the context of the POA.

Further, Mr. Chairman, my delegation considers that the language on gender as one of the important successes of the Third Review Conference. We welcome the reference to ‘gender-based violence’, recognizing that the Biennial Meeting of States, in the lead up to the Third Review Conference, laid the foundation for such significant progress.

We urge all States to strive toward the full implementation of the POA and underscore the importance of international cooperation and assistance in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its belief that the Arms Trade Treaty, if implemented in good faith, could reduce human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible arms transfers, improve regional security and stability, as well as promote accountability and transparency by State Parties concerning transfers of conventional arms. We encourage the Treaty's universalization and register our support for the ATT resolution piloted this year by Latvia, that calls for strong and effective Treaty implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

Trinidad and Tobago shares the majority view that the only world that is safe from the use of nuclear weapons is a world that is completely free of them. This conviction has long underscored the policies of Trinidad and Tobago as we are a signatory to the 1967 Treaty of Tlateloco which established the world's first Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, my country stands firm in our commitments to uphold the important and necessary obligations conferred upon us under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons in 2017 by a majority of States, challenged the perception that disarmament is the neglected goal of the United Nations. Trinidad and Tobago was pleased to be among the States that supported this historic Treaty and we are working diligently to sign and ratify in short order.

We join other delegations in highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The human and environmental impact of nuclear weapon use and testing is not confined to the past. It remains a threat to the pursuit of sustainable development goals relating to health and well-being; gender equality and; the environment on land and in the oceans.

CARICOM was part of a group of States which advocated for 'positive obligations' in the Treaty. These "positive obligations" or "remedial measures" on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance provide an opportunity to address the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons activities to human rights, sustainable development and the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

Human security—our ability to protect, feed, house and support our citizens—depends upon effective disarmament. Disarmament therefore cannot exist in a vacuum; it must be part of a broader conversation about vulnerability, insecurity, and weaponization.

In this regard, my delegation is proud to be among those at the forefront of integrating women, peace, and security into disarmament discourses. When Trinidad and Tobago first introduced the resolution on *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* in 2010, it was suggested that the issue would find no traction in the First Committee, a sentiment that was subsequently disproven. Gender is an undeniable factor in peace and security. Women play a crucial leadership role in the ability of communities to counter violence and insecurity. Women must play a similarly crucial role in disarmament. The resolution will again be addressed during the current Session of this Committee to reflect recent developments in this field and we welcome the support of the Committee for this important resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation expresses its concern with respect to the harm and risks associated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). It is estimated that thousands, if not more civilians, have been killed, injured or displaced as a result of this technology. Due to their unique characteristics, armed UAV operations raise particular implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation therefore denounces the ethical, legal and humanitarian consequences of the use of armed UAVs in a manner incompatible with international law.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

Permit me to thank UN-LIREC for the valuable practical work that organization continues to undertake in CARICOM Member States including my own country, in many spheres of disarmament.

I thank you.