STATEMENT BY

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OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

IN THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

OF THE

THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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[FINAL TEXT]
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We also pay tribute to the previous Chairman during the 59th session, Ambassador de Alba of Mexico whose sterling work has assisted us in improving the efficiency of this Committee. We should continue to build on his efforts.

Jamaica associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and by the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We support their statements and only wish to make the following additional remarks.

Mr. Chairman,

This past year was a particularly challenging one for achieving the objectives of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It had been hoped that the opportunity presented by the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations would have generated the momentum necessary for the realization of previously agreed commitments. This, unfortunately, has not been the case.

At the same time, there is increased anxiety about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility that these weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists and other persons. There is a general feeling of unease and the world now seems even more insecure.

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica like other delegations was disappointed that the Outcome Document did not provide guidelines relevant to advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We were able to find agreement on other matters such as terrorism, human rights and even on management reforms of the Secretariat; yet, on matters of immense consequence to the very survival and existence of mankind there was silence. This should be pointed out, is in spite of the fact that disarmament and the regulation of armaments constitutes an important obligation under the Charter.

The current state of events while disappointing should not really be a surprise as inaction on disarmament issues seems to be the order of the day as we have seen from the failure of the Seventh Review Conference of the NPT earlier this year, the very dismal track-record of the Conference on Disarmament and the continuing inability of the Disarmament Commission to function by even agreeing on its agenda. It is seems clear that urgent action is needed to reverse this trend.
We would at the same time like to commend the Government of Mexico for the successful convening of the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones which was held from 26 to 28 April this year. It is hoped that we can build on the successful outcome of this Conference in order to move closer to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite all the challenges, Jamaica remains committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament. We believe that the great military powers should take the lead. We deem it critical that there should be the fulfillment by the nuclear-weapon states of their obligations under the multilateral disarmament instruments in particular under Article VI of the NPT. There should be adherence to previously agreed commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation including those of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT and of the I3 practical steps that were agreed on. Unless commitments are fully respected and honored, there will be no progress on reaching non-proliferation goals. It should be clear to us that the strengthening of confidence in international security will be dependent on the absence of discriminatory or selective application of the norms and regulations governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Jamaica agrees that it is now time for fresh approaches to be found so as to effect real change in the disarmament agenda. We can broadly support the thinking of the President of the General Assembly for an approach based on creativity and new ideas. Such moves for change, however, should not be at the expense of previously agreed instruments and need to be based on a firm commitment to multilateralism underpinned by strong political will.

This year’s session of the First Committee should provide the opportunity for a discussion on how to reactivate disarmament. We are therefore inclined to support the proposal put forward by the representative of Pakistan yesterday for you, Mr. Chairman, to conduct a number of informal consultations on the ways to move forward on the international disarmament agenda.

We are however convinced that the convening of the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament would be the best means in which to have a thorough review and discussion of all matters relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Such a session, is long overdue and would allow for a review of the disarmament machinery and focus on the current challenges to international security. It is preferable that discussion on such matters should be held in a universal
intergovernmental forum so that we could have a comprehensive approach on all matters relating to disarmament and non-proliferation and include the participation of all states.

Mr. Chairman,

We note there has been some modest progress in the implementation of the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. This was reflected in reports submitted by States during the Second Biennial Meeting held in July this year.

But much more needs to be done. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to escalate and to undermine the stability and the social and economic fabric of many developing countries.

We were therefore profoundly disappointed that the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established to elaborate an international instrument on the marking and tracing of illicit weapons did not produce an instrument which would be legally binding. It cannot be of any assurance to us that it is to be politically binding. In the light of experience at the failure of political will to honour disarmament instruments, we have little confidence that implementation will be effectively pursued by producer countries. We therefore have to register our strong reservations on the recommendation that the Working Group has placed before us.

The international community needs to make a firmer commitment to deal effectively with the proliferation of this category of weapons which seriously affects our national security.

In conclusion, Jamaica welcomes the implementation of the Nairobi Plan of action on landmines adopted last year. As a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, Jamaica is committed to the full implementation of this Treaty. We commend the steps taken in order to curb the use of antipersonnel land mines and congratulate those countries which are seeking to actively comply with its provisions.

Thank you.