Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

TO THE

FIRST COMMITTEE

ON

OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

AT THE

69TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OCTOBER 23, 2014

United Nations Headquarters
New York

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Mr. Chairman,

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

CARICOM has a long-standing commitment to working in the multilateral arena to address the threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction. Concrete evidence of this can be seen in Member States' ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons.

The Member States of CARICOM neither produce nor possess weapons of mass destruction. However, we are of the strong view that the use of such weapons is unjustifiable, and are acutely aware of the devastating humanitarian, economic and other consequences of such use. In today's globalized world no country has the luxury of remaining indifferent to this threat.

Moreover, the capabilities and tactics of terrorists are becoming ever more sophisticated, posing an ever-evolving and asymmetric threat to national and international peace and security. The acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction is a very real possibility, and must be met with firm political will, constant vigilance and international collaboration. It is of the utmost importance that Member States take and strengthen national measures to prevent the acquisition by terrorists of such weapons, their means of delivery, and materials and
technologies related to their manufacture. In these efforts, cross-sectoral partnerships between governments, industry and communities are essential.

Recent uses of chemical weapons in Syria represent a timely reminder of the urgent need for the international community to deepen its resolve and commitment to totally eliminate these weapons, as well as all nuclear, radiological and biological weapons and their delivery systems. Without question, the proliferation and use of these weapons constitute a grave threat to international peace and security and demands concerted and resolute action.

In recognition of this urgency, CARICOM Member States continue to make significant progress in meeting these important non-proliferation obligations under the three non-proliferation regimes and as mandated by UNSCR 1540.

Notwithstanding other significant challenges facing our countries on the security front -- particularly in relation to preventing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the trafficking of illegal narcotics -- CARICOM states continue to commit considerable resources to implementing legislation, attendant regulations, and administrative controls to prevent the transshipment, transit, import, export, and brokering of dual-use materials and other strategic goods which can be used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Of particular importance is our ongoing focus on the development of adequate export control infrastructure, control lists governing strategic
items, as well as the training of enforcement and operational personnel to detect, identify, and interdict these prohibited commodities and to prosecute violations where appropriate.

Progress in meeting these key objectives has been significantly aided by our ongoing cooperation with the CARICOM-UNSCR 1540 Implementation Programme which has coordinated meaningful assistance with other key partners, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Interpol, and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Given the Programme's role in advancing regional non-proliferation efforts and its recent designation as the Regional Focal Point for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee to aid CARICOM Member States' work in the implementation of UNSCRs 1373 and 1624, it is critical that the Programme continues to receive adequate support to assist Member States in undertaking these important obligations.

This need for continued and expanded support has indeed been further underscored by the recent adoption of UNSCR 2178 which, inter alia, calls for the development of legislation and appropriate enforcement mechanisms to prevent the facilitation and movement of foreign terrorist fighters to conflict zones. Requisite assistance to CARICOM Members in meeting these obligations, as well as those pertaining to non-proliferation and the broader fight against terrorism, will
undoubtedly demand a sustained engagement from the international community in aiding the work of the CARICOM Coordinator.

CARICOM looks forward to continued engagement with the United Nations system and other partners in this area, and will remain committed to regional and international efforts to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction.

I thank you.