STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

by

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THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
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ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
AGENDA ITEMS (ITEMS 87 TO 104)

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (“CARICOM”) during the General Debate of the First Committee on All Disarmament and International Security Agenda Items.

Mr. Chairman, we offer congratulations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We are pleased that a member of our sub-region is in the Chair and you can be assured of our full support as you seek to bring about a successful conclusion to the work of this Committee.

Permit us also, Mr. Chairman, to express our appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi of Libya, Chair of the First Committee during the 68th Session.

CARICOM also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (“NAM”).

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Chairman,

This Committee has been forced to acknowledge within recent months, that the constantly changing global security environment has rendered no State or group of States, big or small, exempt 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.

In this atmosphere, Mr. Chairman, CARICOM wishes to underscore the paramount responsibility of the United Nations, that is, the maintenance of international peace and security. For Small States such as those in CARICOM, this role is of particular importance, since the sustainable development of our sub-region is inextricably linked to the safety and security of our people. It is against this backdrop, Mr. Chairman, that CARICOM strongly encourages all States to demonstrate the political will to continue to pursue disarmament and non-proliferation efforts relentlessly.

**Arms Trade Treaty**

This enhanced political will was demonstrated most recently when the global community witnessed the attainment of the required threshold of fifty ratifications necessary for entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (“ATT”). CARICOM is extremely satisfied that we are in the period of the ninety day countdown to entry into force of this historic Treaty. December 24 will usher in a new era for the trade in conventional arms including small arms and light weapons and its ammunition.

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. CARICOM is pleased to inform that two of its Member States, the
Commonwealth of The Bahamas and Saint Lucia, have brought the number of ratifications in our region to eight, which makes us the second regional grouping after the European Union (“EU”) with the most number of ratifications. All CARICOM Member States have signed the ATT.

Mr. Chairman, entry into force of the ATT will require States Parties to make important decisions to implement the provisions of the Treaty at the First Conference of States Parties which is likely to be convened by mid-2015. One of the decisions to be made is that of the location of the Secretariat of the ATT. Over a year ago, my own country, Trinidad and Tobago, announced its candidature to have the ATT Secretariat located in Port of Spain. This bid has been endorsed by all CARICOM States and has so far received the support of a number of States from diverse regions. The hosting of this important body in a region that is disproportionately affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its association with other trans-boundary crimes, such as drug trafficking would be a significant development. It would give true meaning to the principle of equitable geographic distribution in the hosting of major global institutions.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to providing the necessary resources to host the Secretariat, and this has been communicated to all Member States. CARICOM, therefore, requests the support of the entire global community for this candidature.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons**

Mr. Chairman, small arms and light weapons has been described as “the weapons of mass destruction” in our region. Approximately seventy percent of murders in our sub-region are committed by the use of handguns. These weapons are also the arms of choice and are a key tool and driver of armed violence, inclusive of gang violence and organized crime.

As a region heavily affected by small arms trafficking, CARICOM 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 mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Consequently, CARICOM actively participated in the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to consider implementation of the POA (“BMS5”) in June 2014. Our sub-region’s common position regarding all aspects of the implementation of the POA and the International Tracing Instrument (“ITI”) was encapsulated in CARICOM’s Working Paper which guided our deliberations during the meeting. Our position was framed within the context of the 2013 CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy (“CCSS”), which was adopted by the Heads of Government of CARICOM, and provides a clear directive for coordinated action on crime and security within our sub-region.

We welcomed the adoption of the outcome document of the BMS5 and call again, on the Member States of the United Nations to undertake effective implementation of the decisions contained in the outcome document at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. CARICOM is of the view that emphasis should be placed on strengthened international cooperation and assistance, border controls, as well as the sharing of best practices.
We remain open to engage in substantive discussions on issues outside the scope of the POA, but which are critical to its effective implementation. In this regard, we note that there are existing complementarities between implementation of the POA and the ATT.

In our bid to implement the POA, CARICOM pledges its support for the one week open-ended meeting of Governmental Experts scheduled for 2015. 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.

Mr. Chairman, bilateral, regional and international cooperation initiatives are important components in the implementation of the POA. CARICOM, therefore, commends the work being undertaken by 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. We look forward to continued collaboration with UN-LiREC.

**Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation**

Mr. Chairman, with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, CARICOM wishes to recall the words of Secretary General, Bank Ki-Moon, on the commemoration of the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, observed on September 26, 2014, “Nuclear disarmament is (therefore) not an idealistic dream, but an urgent necessity to meet the genuine security interests of all humanity.”

We mourn the fact that forty-four years since the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (“NPT”) entered into force, the international community is still unable to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament.

CARICOM is of the view that the global community should seize the opportunity, mere months away from the 2015 Review Conference on the NPT, to make critical decisions about the place of nuclear weapons in our world. It is critical that the line between permitted and prohibited nuclear activities is drawn clearly and irrevocably.

As States which subscribe fully to the rule of law in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, CARICOM holds firmly to the 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.

We are proud to be part of the first densely populated region in the world to declare itself a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlateloco, which established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). We, therefore, advocate for multilateral cooperation in the areas of non-proliferation and of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes, as contemplated in Security Council resolution 1540. We also encourage, Mr. Chairman, the States which have mandated the implementation of resolution 1540, to honour their obligations under the NPT.
Mr. Chairman, we are hopeful that all regions of the world will be declared nuclear-weapon-free zones.

At this critical juncture, chances of progress depend on the achievement of universality of the NPT and in this vein, CARICOM encourages all States which have not yet done so, to become Party to the NPT. Additionally, we call on Nuclear Weapon States to honour their legal commitment to nuclear disarmament by implementing Article VI of the NPT.

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.

**Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons**

CARICOM holds that any discourse on nuclear weapons is incomplete without an acknowledgement of the humanitarian impact of these weapons, which was embodied in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Outcome Document. We welcome growing global attention to this matter, including through meetings which took place in Norway in 2013 and Mexico in February 2014. We look forward to the meeting to be held in December of this year in Austria, as it will provide another opportunity for governments and civil society to begin deliberations on measures geared toward the banning of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM recognizes that it has a part to play in the discussions, and consequently, hosted a regional meeting in August of this year in Jamaica, aimed at advancing the discourse on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. This event was organized by the International Law and Policy Institute (“ILPI”), the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences at the University of the West Indies (“ICENS-UWI”) and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (“ICAN”).

**Nuclear Safety and Security**

Mr. Chairman, CARICOM reiterates its strong opposition to the shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. 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. In this regard, we remain concerned about the deleterious and long-term impact of any accident which may occur in relation to such shipments.

We call for enhanced dialogue with those responsible for transshipment of this nuclear waste within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (“IAEA”), which continues to assist our region.

**Weapons of Mass Destruction**

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

Without question, regional progress in preventing the proliferation of WMDs is inextricably linked to the economic viability of CARICOM Member States. We are cognizant of the region’s susceptibility to external shocks, including those occasioned by acts of terrorism, as was the case with the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Notwithstanding the fact that these events took place outside of the Caribbean, the economic impact within the first year reverberated throughout our region.

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 Office of the CARICOM Regional Coordinator for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540, in its efforts to sensitize CARICOM on responses to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear and Explosive ("CBRNE") emergencies.

Women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

Mr. Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago, with the support of CARICOM and a number of co-sponsors will again sponsor its resolution on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, during the current session of this Committee.

We welcome the Secretary General’s Report on Member States’ implementation of resolution 68/33 on this important initiative and take special note of the actions being taken at the national and regional levels, as well as within the United Nations system to promote the participation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in particular as it relates to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict.

This year, we have updated the resolution to reflect recent developments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and related issues, inclusive of provisions for gender based violence ("GBV") in the Arms Trade Treaty.

Once again we welcome the support of the Committee for this resolution so it can again be adopted by consensus.

CONCLUSION

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the First Committee has another opportunity to engage in progressive dialogue and to begin meaningful negotiations on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.
As we continue to embark on this process, let us not forget the words of the Secretary General in his report of the Work of the Organization 2014 (A/69/1), “The global security environment in which the United Nations operates continues to exhibit worrying trends. Security threats have become more complex, with the use of unconventional tactics and often direct attacks against civilians and the United Nations…”

Against this backdrop, CARICOM calls on all Members of the international community to heed these words and at the same time pledge its renewed commitment to work with Member States, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to assist the United Nations in fully realizing one of its founding principles contained in the Charter, that is, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman, our rhetoric must finally be transposed into concerted action, if only for the sake of generations to come.

I thank you.

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