STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

FIRST COMMITTEE
SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Check on Delivery
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the thematic debate on Disarmament Machinery.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean Community reaffirms the importance of the United Nations disarmament machinery and values the work undertaken by the various mechanisms in this regard including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee.

The role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament is respected. It is with regret therefore, that we observe the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to attain consensus on its programme of work and in particular on nuclear disarmament. Equally regrettable is the fact that the Disarmament Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly during the past sixteen years. This is a blight on otherwise progressive mechanisms that are aimed at facilitating the elimination of the proliferation of weaponry in all its manifestations.

Against this backdrop, it is our fervent hope that within the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission, delegations work steadfastly to overcome the paralysis that has prevented a conclusion of agreement in key areas of disarmament deliberations.

We also concur with the view that the issue of transparency through the expanded membership of bodies like the Conference on Disarmament should remain a priority. The Caribbean Community therefore, calls for the revitalization and strengthening of mechanisms like the CD so that they may remain fit for purpose. The need for enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament cannot be over-emphasized. As the forum in which all UN Member States are represented, there is
room for the First Committee to be further utilized as a conduit to promote the multilateral disarmament agenda and new programmes.

At this juncture, the Caribbean Community expresses its appreciation to Mr. Kim Won-soo, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the invaluable role of the ODA as coordinator and facilitator in regional and global disarmament initiatives. CARICOM also notes with appreciation, the UN Programme of fellowships on disarmament that has played a decisive role in fostering a better understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and of the other institutions working in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at the global and regional level, as well as of international security.

Mr. Chairman,

There can be no sustainable development without security, justice, good governance and peace. Consequently, CARICOM attaches tremendous importance to the implementation of the SDGs and, in this context, SDG 16, that calls for peace, justice and strong institutions, CARICOM is strongly of the view that disarmament is the crucial link between peace and sustainable development. Regional and global approaches to disarmament complement each other and must be pursued simultaneously.

In this regard, we commend the stellar contributions of the regional centres as these centres provide capacity building and a range of training opportunities to Member States upon their request. We join in congratulating the UN and the Centres as they celebrate their thirtieth year of operation. We applaud their hard work and note with satisfaction that since their creation more than twenty thousand officials have been trained by the Centres, over five hundred seminars have been convened, approximately thirteen thousand weapons have been marked and over one hundred and seventy-six thousand weapons and one hundred and thirty tons of ammunition have been destroyed.

CARICOM wishes to especially thank and acknowledge the work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America
and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in Peru, that has over the past year, *inter alia*, undertaken more than sixty substantive activities to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council Resolution 1540.

Accordingly, CARICOM notes with appreciation, the voluntary contributions to UNLIREC from the Governments of the USA, Canada, Germany, Peru, Mexico and Guyana over the last financial reporting period.

Similarly, the leading role taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency in radioactive security and by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in independent research on disarmament matters are to be applauded.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean Community values nuclear weapon-free-zones as important instruments to ensure peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and advance the objective of nuclear disarmament. We therefore commend the contribution of existing nuclear weapon-free zones to attaining these goals. In this connection, it is to be noted that the CARICOM membership are proud States Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, that will shortly be observing its 50th anniversary.

Mr. Chairman,

Security Council Resolution 1540 is a pivotal component of the global disarmament machinery because of the binding obligations it imposes on Member States in the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The Caribbean Community has benefitted from UNSCR 1540 implementation assistance from several organisations and through the tireless efforts of the CARICOM 1540 Regional Coordinator.
Mr. Chairman,

As non-nuclear states, small arms and light weapons and unexploded devices act as the proverbial weapons of destruction of the CARICOM sub-region. The proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons continues to cause devastating and lasting impacts in our countries.

It is against this backdrop that the Caribbean Community lends its fullest support to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent and Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects. Of equal focus is the Outcome Document emanating from the Sixth Biennial Conference pertaining to the same that took place in June of this year. CARICOM looks forward to active participation in the 2018 Review Conference of the Programme of Action.

Similarly, we endorse the draft decision for the Convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament in the agenda of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, the gender dimension of disarmament, particularly the need for more gender-balanced participation in the disarmament machinery, must occur to facilitate new perspectives and thinking as well as the involvement of a wider constituency. Also, the input of civil society and academia would also contribute positively to the disarmament processes. Hence we commend, the Resolution on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arm control as this resolution promotes fundamental principles that are synonymous with the Caribbean Community.

I thank you.