GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

STATEMENT BY
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ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON OTHER DISARMAMENT MEASURES

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

My remarks will focus on two areas that are of great importance to the region; gender and disarmament, and disarmament and development.

We affirm that disarmament is fundamentally about ensuring that we are all living in a safe and secure world. Within that context, CARICOM is of the firm view that the continued consideration of gender perspectives can advance the achievement of disarmament goals, away from the traditional perspective to one that embraces, a multi-dimensional and humanitarian approach, with the aim that no woman, man; boy or girl will be left behind.

We welcome Security Council Resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, which reaffirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and stress the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

These resolutions urge all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. They also call on all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

General Assembly resolution 65/69, first adopted in 2010, in specific recognition of the 10th Anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, aims to urge Member States to promote equal opportunities for women in disarmament and decision-making processes and to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in the field of disarmament. This resolution is biennially tabled in the First Committee by CARICOM Member State, Trinidad and Tobago, titled Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control and remains the only General Assembly resolution that addresses the vital links between women and disarmament. In 2016 this resolution was adopted for a fifth time.

Over the years, substantive updates to the text were made in relation to the 2015 review of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and the Arms Trade Treaty. These additions only served to strengthen this important resolution as we all seek to position gender and disarmament as a core and cross-cutting item on the agenda of the United Nations.

CARICOM Member States welcome the specific inclusion of the impact of women and girls in the Treaty in the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty also recognizes the importance of “equal, full and effective participation of both men and women” in achieving sustainable peace and security and declares its members’ commitment to supporting and strengthening the effective participation of women in nuclear disarmament.
Additionally, in 2016 at the sixth biennial meeting of states to consider implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, States agreed to ensure the participation of women in the Programme of Action processes. They undertook to encourage the collection of disaggregated data on gender and illicit small arms and light weapons. This is particularly relevant and important to CARICOM member states as we encounter the differing impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons on women, men, boys and girls in our communities.

Our region also looks forward to RevCon3 to build on the discussions held at BMS 6, in respect of gender-related disarmament issues.

In the Caribbean region, while men are most often the victims of gun crimes, it is the women who are left to become the sole bread-winner for families and risk falling into poverty. Women also have to deal with the resulting emotional and mental trauma that follows in the wake of gun violence. For this reason, we believe that women must be included in the disarmament discourse at all levels.

While we welcome the greater attention that gender is being given in international disarmament, CARICOM remains cognizant that there are still too many firsts as it relates to women in disarmament. We continue to reiterate the need to ensure gender diversity in these discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

Even though the CARICOM region is not affected by armed conflict, we face tremendous challenges as it relates to armed violence in our countries.

According to statistics, approximately 70% of homicides within the region feature the use of firearms; as a result, significant resources are diverted from development and by extension social and development goals. The fallout from this violence can plunge families and communities in poverty and cause significant damage to a country's longer-term development efforts. Security costs can cause delay in social, education and infrastructure programs, and create an untenable burden for countries that are already heavily indebted and vulnerable to natural disasters.

For CARICOM, the problem of illegal weapons is closely linked to transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking and money laundering, and the region is engaged in efforts to combat the effects of these destructive elements. A consequence of this is the opportunity cost that limited resources are diverted from improving economic and social situation have had to be diverted to address security and monitoring systems due to the presence of illegal weapons in our territories.

Developing nations are often more negatively affected by the use and trade of weapons, and no CARICOM member state is an arms producer. A diverse range of perspectives must be present at the international disarmament forum in order to ensure that the decisions made are reflective of worldwide concerns. Underrepresentation of lower-income countries at international disarmament forums must be addressed in a holistic manner.
In this regard, CARICOM welcomes the tabling of the resolution, the *Relationship between disarmament and development*, being tabled by Indonesia on behalf of the members of the Non-aligned Movement that annually urges the international community to devote resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries. We encourage all Member States to continue to support.

CARICOM will continue to be among the loudest voices in international forums to ensure that the discussions on these issues reflect the worldwide population. We also wish to emphasize the valuable role played by civil society highlighting these issues and partnering with developing nations in this regard.

In closing, CARICOM also would like to reiterate the impact that armed violence has had on development and quality of life in our communities. We will continue to work along with Member States to ensure that there is wider framing of disarmament and weapons issues to address humanitarian and development agendas.

Thank you.