STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

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

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Check against Delivery
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the thematic debate on Disarmament Machinery. As this is my first address to this Committee, allow me to congratulate you on your successful election as Chair of the First Committee. I also extend congratulations to the other members of the bureau. Please be assured of the support of The Bahamas Delegation to your work.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to reiterate the significance CARICOM attaches to the United Nations disarmament machinery and the work of related mechanisms which fall under it, including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee. As has been previously referenced by many Delegations in this Committee, the current global context has demonstrated the need for innovative and enhanced dialogue and commitment toward the goal of disarmament.

It remains a disappointment, therefore, that we observe the persistent 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 in recent years.

It is our fervent hope that within the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission, Delegations work steadfastly, in a transparent and inclusive manner, to overcome the paralysis that has prevented a conclusion of agreement in key areas of disarmament deliberations. In this regard, CARICOM welcomes the upcoming Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, and extends its appreciation to the Open-ended Working Group for its diligent efforts to arrive at consensus on the objectives and agenda of the Special Session.

Mr. Chairman,

At this juncture, the Caribbean Community expresses its appreciation to Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and, to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the invaluable role of the ODA as the coordinator of regional and global disarmament initiatives. CARICOM also notes with appreciation, the UN Programme of fellowships on disarmament which promotes greater understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery.
and of the other institutions working in the areas of international security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Mr. Chairman,

There can be no sustainable development without security, justice, good governance and peace. CARICOM attaches tremendous importance to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and, in the context of Disarmament, Goal 16, which calls for peace, justice and strong institutions. CARICOM strongly views disarmament as the fundamental link between peace and sustainable development. Regional and global disarmament approaches are mutually complementary and must be pursued simultaneously.

CARICOM commends the stellar contributions of the regional centres, which provide capacity building and a range of training opportunities to Member States upon their request. We wish to highlight our appreciation for the work of 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, 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. We also welcome UNLIREC initiatives which seek to promote youth involvement in Disarmament affairs, particularly regarding the use of firearms.

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

Similarly, CARICOM applauds the leading role taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency through its robust verification and monitoring mechanisms as well as its contribution to radioactive security. We also wish to commend the work of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for its independent research on disarmament affairs. Such research provides an invaluable forum for the dissemination and promotion of disarmament-related information.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean Community maintains the critical importance of nuclear weapon-free-zones as confidence building instruments which ensure peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and advance nuclear disarmament. We therefore commend existing nuclear weapon-free zones in their effort to attain these goals. In
this connection, CARICOM countries are proud States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will be observing its 50th anniversary this year.

CARICOM calls on States to renew efforts to address obligations under relevant disarmament Conventions, Resolutions, and international legal frameworks, including UN Security Council Resolution 1540, the 1996 ICJ Advisory Opinion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons and Resolution 71/56 on “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”. Recent activities in the Korean Peninsula, and in other regions, reinforce the threat weapons of mass destruction pose globally, not least of all to innocent civilians. In this regard, CARICOM welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and hopes this Treaty, along with others, foster workable, humanitarian-based approaches to advance disarmament objectives.

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

It is against this backdrop that CARICOM lends its full 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 and relevant outcome documents pertaining to the same. CARICOM looks forward to active participation in the 2018 Review Conference of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM also recognises the vital contributions of civil society, in particular non-governmental organisations and the private sector, in the maintenance of peace and security. With the onset of emerging technological innovations and the potential risks such innovations may pose to security, including cyber security, their involvement is more crucial than ever.

To conclude, CARICOM wishes to reiterate its congratulations to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded this year’s Nobel Peace Prize. Such an accomplishment demonstrates not only the importance work that has been done, but the work that remains. The Disarmament Machinery represents our collective will to achieve total disarmament. We must remain cognizant of why it connects us to one another and what is at stake if we fail it.

I thank you.