FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE
ON
OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Rudolph Michael Ten-Pow
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on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

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Conference Room 4
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of CARICOM who welcome the opportunity to contribute to the thematic debate on the cluster - Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

2. CARICOM reiterates its strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and for the work being done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure its full implementation. As the first Disarmament Agreement that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention has made a significant contribution towards the goal of general and complete disarmament and the codification of a universal norm against the use of chemical weapons. We recall the observation in the preamble to the Chemical Weapons Convention that "...achievements in the field of chemistry should be used exclusively for the benefit of mankind". Frankly, we are dismayed and alarmed at the incidents confirmed by OPCW, where chemicals have been used as weapons. CARICOM condemns these incidents in the strongest terms and calls upon all Member States to uphold the provisions of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

3. We are of the view that the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances is unjustifiable, unacceptable and illegal. Their use has grave consequences for the affected populations and for the environment and we must therefore ensure that any use of chemical weapons is fully and impartially investigated and those responsible are held accountable. We believe that this will not only contribute to the further strengthening of the norm against
chemical-weapon use but is an indispensable part of ensuring that victims of such incidents receive redress.

Mr. Chairman,

4. CARICOM welcomes the progress achieved in the global effort to permanently eliminate chemical weapons. We take note of the reports of the Director-General of OPCW regarding the full and complete destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles by a number of States Parties to the Convention. We view these as serious and tangible steps towards universal implementation of the Convention and we urge those Member States that may be defaulting on their obligations under the Convention to take the steps that are necessary to bring about full compliance. We encourage the few remaining Member States that have neither signed nor ratified the Convention to act in the spirit of the Charter and join the one hundred and ninety-three (193) States that are parties to the Convention so that we can achieve the goal of universal adherence. For our part, the Member States of CARICOM will continue to be principled adherents to the Convention and to strongly advocate for compliance with its provisions by both States Parties and non-state actors.

5. CARICOM also takes this opportunity to express our appreciation to OPCW for its ongoing capacity-building initiatives in our region in keeping with the aims of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman

6. CARICOM also wishes to reaffirm its support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We note with satisfaction the agreement reached by
consensus at the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017 to retain the previous structure of meetings for the inter-sessional period. We believe that our collective and consistent engagement on issues within the ambit of the Biological Weapons Convention is especially vital at this time when developments in science and technology are increasing the possibilities for the acquisition, access to and use of biological weapons, including by non-state actors.

7. CARICOM notes the observation made by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament that the world is largely unprepared for the catastrophic consequences that would result from a deliberately released disease. Robust measures must therefore be taken at the national level to complement regional and international efforts to bring about the full and effective implementation of the Convention. We also share the Secretary General's view that a stronger international capacity to investigate any alleged use of biological weapons and to quickly detect any illegal acts would serve as a deterrent to their use.

8. We take this opportunity to appeal to all Member States that have not yet signed and ratified the Convention to do so as a matter of urgency in order to ensure its universalization and effective application. We are encouraged by the increase in the number of States Parties to the Convention and applaud those countries that have most recently ratified it.

Mr. Chairman,

9. CARICOM shares the concern of other Member States about the spread of missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We believe that the efforts of the international community should be geared towards limiting the spread of these
systems and the equipment, technology and knowledge needed to develop, produce and acquire WMD missile delivery systems.

10. CARICOM is deeply concerned about the increasing threat posed to international peace and security by terrorists and other non-State actors. And we are particularly concerned about the danger posed by their possession of any type of weapon of mass destruction. We are conscious of the challenges involved in ensuring that terrorists do not install themselves in the sovereign territories of Member States to pursue aims that are contrary to the various disarmament instruments to which the international community has subscribed. This reality is especially acute for Member States of CARICOM, where our porous maritime and land borders present special challenges in keeping out undesirable individuals and assets. These challenges are further compounded by the poverty and marginalization of some sectors of our populations, who therefore become fertile breeding ground for radicalization.

11. It is against this backdrop that CARICOM has collaborated with the United Nations in the elaboration of a CARICOM Counter-Terrorism Strategy to confront terrorism and associated violent extremism. This Strategy, which was adopted by CARICOM Heads of Government in February 2018, is based on respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law, good governance, and religious tolerance. The Strategy pays particular attention to preventing radicalization and addresses the phenomenon of returning Foreign Terrorists Fighters by providing for their reintegration into society, in keeping with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We believe that a resilient region that is able to withstand and confront violent extremist ideologies is key to preventing radicalization and we wish to underscore the importance of a cooperative approach at all levels towards the
achievement of this goal. For our part, CARICOM is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 and will again join the consensus in adopting the resolution *Preventing Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction.*

Mr. Chairman,

12. I wish to conclude by reiterating CARICOM's unwavering commitment to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and by urging all Member States to step up their efforts both individually and collectively to ensure full alignment with the legal regime governing such weapons.

I thank you.