STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

by

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COUNSELLOR

DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
74th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
AGENDA ITEMS (ITEMS 89 TO 105)

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UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on all disarmament and international security agenda items. We extend our congratulations to you on your election as Chair of this Committee and we offer congratulations and best wishes to the other members of the Bureau on their election. Please be assured of CARICOM’s full support as you embark on your Chairmanship. We also express our gratitude to your predecessor His Excellency Ion Jinga of Romania, for his stewardship during his tenure as Chair of the First Committee during the 73rd Session. CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.
Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM underlines its unwavering support for the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament and its priority areas of disarmament to save humanity, disarmament to save lives, and disarmament for future generations. We also fully endorse the observation of the Secretary General that “disarmament supports sustainable development” and in this regard we maintain our appreciation for the Agenda for Disarmament, which is in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also reiterate the importance our region attaches to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the contribution this Committee can make, not only to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 16 but also to the attainment of SDG 5.2 to eliminate violence against women and girls.

A few days ago in the Hall of this august organization, Heads of State and Government delivered sobering messages on the state of affairs in the global community. The singular message that resonated clearly was that a challenging road lies ahead, unless we collectively do what is required to alter the current trajectory of the world including in the field of disarmament and international security. As CARICOM, we continue to note with concern, the escalation of strife and conflict between States, the ever-increasing influence of non-state actors, the scale and reach of international terrorism and new proliferation threats. To this end, CARICOM maintains that in order to successfully confront these challenges, we are required to place emphasis on multilateral
response strategies that will transform our current global circumstance to one that will benefit all of humanity.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM has noted with concern that criminal activity has moved from random acts of criminality to criminal networks, the activities of which are being carried out in an organized, highly sophisticated and technological global environment. The prevalence of gun-related violence and the pervasiveness of gun-related fatalities due to the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition, illicit drugs, money laundering, cyber-crime and other dimensions of trans-boundary criminal activities continue to pose the most immediate and significant threats to the security of our region. These compounded challenges represent a threat to our socio-economic well-being, the rule of law and our peace and security. To confront these challenges, the implementing agency on strategies related to crime and security, CARICOM IMPACS, continues to treat with the multidimensional nature of crime and security guided by the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy. CARICOM IMPACS has been working on assets recovery in the area of asset tracing, asset management and prosecuting assets forfeiture cases, along with capacity building at the level of the judiciary, prosecutors and detectives. CARICOM IMPACS has also embarked on a number of initiatives and partnerships to track the proceeds of crime.

Illegal firearms feature in many of the crimes of violence and homicides committed in CARICOM Member States. The prevalence of Illegal firearms account for significant loss of lives and negatively affect countries’ productivity and economies. To this end, CARICOM has committed to the continued strengthening of regional approaches to address the multidimensional nature of crime and security as we are keenly aware that the sustainable development of the Caribbean Community depends on the safety and security of the citizens.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM has found non-binding legal agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. We therefore reiterate the importance we place on 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) and the International Tracing Instrument as critical components in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. While we strive for consensus during
negotiations on substantive issues related to the UN-PoA, we welcomed the outcome document of
the 2018 Review Conference and looks forward to the convening of the next Biennial Meeting of
States in 2020. We are also pleased that the CARICOM Declaration on Small Arms and Light
Weapons sought to implement all necessary actions at the national and regional level to fully
combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in alignment with
international instruments. This includes the development and implementation of national action
plans, capacity building within national and regional security entities and implementation and
enforcement of policies and legislation.

Mr. Chairman

We in CARICOM remain fervent in our conviction that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can
contribute significantly in freeing many of our citizens and countless people around the world,
especially women and children, from the deadly tyranny associated with the pervasiveness of
unregulated small arms and light weapons.

As the life of the ATT progresses beyond the recently concluded Fifth Conference of
States Parties (CSP) CARICOM wishes to underline that for the landmark treaty to be a success,
it must be implemented in good faith by all States Parties including the major manufacturers,
exporters and importers of conventional weapons. We therefore welcome Argentina’s Presidency
of the Sixth CSP.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to reiterate our gratitude for the continued support it receives from the
United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and
the Caribbean. This organization has supported and assisted Member States of CARICOM in
capacity building measures and technical assistance programmes. We look forward to continued
collaboration in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,
As we turn to the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, CARICOM notes with concern the recent observation by the Secretary-General that, “the painstakingly constructed arms control regime is fraying.” CARICOM maintains 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. Lamentably, we have witnessed within recent times the removal of restraints on nuclear weapons at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels. We are all too aware that an unchecked nuclear arms race could potentially put the world on a path to catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Since this is a course, we must strive to avoid; CARICOM is 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).

Mr. Chairman,

We agree that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is central to the maintenance of international peace and security. The NPT has successfully limited the number of States that possess nuclear weapons. Its safeguards regime provide assurance of the exclusively peaceful nature of civil nuclear programmes. The NPT is also essential to preserving an environment conducive to disarmament. In this regard, we encourage all States, including non-parties, to adhere to the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations and commitments under the NPT. In this connection, CARICOM wishes to assure States Parties of our intention to be a constructive participant in the 2020 NPT Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean Community, participated in the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading towards their Total Elimination and welcomed the adoption of the historic Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons in 2017. CARICOM Member States joined like-minded States in the negotiation of this historic Treaty and we are pleased that since its opening for signature on September 20, 2017, there are already 79 Signatory States and 32 States Parties to the Treaty. CARICOM is proud to state that Guyana,
Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago have already ratified the Treaty and Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis are signatories. More CARICOM countries are expected to do the same in short order as we seek to contribute to the Treaty’s early entry into force and for its universal adherence.

Mr. Chairman,

Without question, regional progress in preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction is inextricably linked to our economic viability and that accounts for CARICOM’s long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats. These threats which we see as being posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) has been underscored by our ratification of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons.

CARICOM benefitted from the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in strengthening our capacity through the sharing of best practices and transfer of technology; from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in providing specialized training in emergency response to deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents.

Mr. Chairman,

There has been significant growth in Cybercrime in the Caribbean. These activities point to the existence of significant cyber security vulnerabilities in the protection frameworks for persons, possessions and privacy and which extend more generally to the information and critical national infrastructures. Cybercrime could have a devastating impact on national security and, if not addressed urgently, could severely hamper social and economic development of CARICOM States. In the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019, Cybercrime is listed as an obstacle and threat to social and sustained economic development in CARICOM.
In this connection, the CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan, developed in 2016, seeks to address the Cyber Security vulnerabilities in each participating CARICOM country and to establish a practical, harmonized standard of practices, systems and expertise for Cyber Security, to which each State could aspire in the short and medium terms. It also seeks to build the required capacity and infrastructure to allow for the timely detection, investigation and prosecution of Cybercrime and possible linkages to other forms of criminal activity. Strengthening Cyber Security is seen as a strategy to achieve technological resilience but is also linked to strategies needed to achieve social resilience and citizen security.

We acknowledge that cyber threats has been recognized as the facilitator of all crimes and as a result, the Region’s capacity, in all aspects, must be developed quickly to keep up with the fast pace of technological development. We therefore welcome continued capacity-building efforts and international cooperation and assistance in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to acknowledge the important role of civil society in the field of disarmament and international security. We value our partnership with members of civil society and commit to continuing our collaboration with them in order to advance the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In summation, Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to work with the international community in realizing to the fullest extent one of the founding principles as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, that of the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you.