STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

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

Delivered by: H.E. Ms. Sheila Carey
Permanent Representative
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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 the thematic debate on Disarmament Machinery.

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. Growing insecurities in international security and cooperation, manifest within the Disarmament Machinery itself, reinforce the need for innovative and enhanced dialogue and redoubled commitment toward the goal of disarmament.

CARICOM underscores the need to maintain momentum on progress made within the Conference of Disarmament, and reiterates its support for the 2018 decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish subsidiary bodies on 7 out of the 8 items allocated to it to consider, inter alia, “emerging and other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference”. We continue to encourage the prompt resumption of negotiations within the CD as it remains a source of grave frustration that significant progress has not been made with respect to the substantive programme of work of the Conference.

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 registers its regret that the Disarmament Commission was unable to hold formal substantive meetings during its last session, though we remain encouraged by the flexibility and commitment of delegations to make progress on the work of the Commission in an informal setting. CARICOM looks forward to more robust movement within the current cycle and to engaging in meaningful discussions to build consensus on “practical recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” as well as on “recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.”

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. Our region has benefited from this Programme and has several alumni, with our own most recent 2019 Fellow being from Trinidad and Tobago.

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, 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.

Consequently, 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 70 technical and legal assistance and training activities to support States in the region in their efforts to implement disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments and adhere to international standards and norms in those fields. Many CARICOM countries have benefitted, and continue to benefit, from support extended by the Centre. CARICOM reiterates the importance of synergies in disarmament and arms control and wishes to underscore its support for the Centre's holistic focus on gender and Agenda 2030, in particular Goal 16.

CARICOM also expresses its appreciation for the voluntary contributions to UNLIREC from the Governments of Canada, Guyana, Germany, Mexico, Peru and the United States of America, as well as States contributing to the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund. In this connection, CARICOM is pleased to note that Antigua and Barbuda became the first CARICOM country to participate in the VTF, holding a regional workshop on ATT implementation in August 2019. We encourage both donors and assistance-seeking States to actively engage with this important mechanism.

UNLIREC also worked, in collaboration with the Governments of Germany and Jamaica, for the successful hosting of a regional seminar in Kingston on conventional ammunition management in preparation for the work of the corresponding GGE in 2020.

Similarly, CARICOM applauds the leading role taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 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, which provides an invaluable forum for the dissemination and promotion of disarmament-related information.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM 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 efforts to attain these goals. In this connection, CARICOM countries are proud States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and encourage States to continue their support of the triennial resolution on the Treaty.

CARICOM reaffirms its support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and is pleased to announce that in the past year alone, three CARICOM States, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica ratified the Treaty, and two CARICOM States, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis signed. We are of the firm belief that this Treaty, along with others, foster workable, humanitarian-based approaches to advance disarmament objectives. To date, nine CARICOM States are signatories to the Treaty and 5 have ratified.
CARICOM also recognises the vital contributions of civil society, in particular non-governmental organisations, in the maintenance of peace and security. We would wish to underscore the engagement that will need to be undertaken with all stakeholders within the arms industry, especially as we try to respond to new and emerging technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

There is still much work to be done to fulfil our mandates on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. CARICOM remains committed to doing its part to support the critical work of the disarmament machinery and calls on all Member States to demonstrate the required collective will to achieve safe and peaceful world.

I thank you.