PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by

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to the United Nations

on behalf of
the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

on

AGENDA ITEM 100:
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

and

AGENDA ITEM 101:
International Drug Control

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I have the honour to speak on agenda items 100 and 101 on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations, namely Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of *Dominica*, *Grenada*, Guyana, Haiti, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country Jamaica.

On their behalf I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We wish to assure you of our full support and we are confident that you will guide the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

Two years ago Member States adopted the first United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. This Convention, complemented by the Optional Protocols on the Traffic in Persons, the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trifficking in Firearms and the Smuggling of Migrants form part of a growing body of legal norms and standards which represent a global response to the growing challenges of international criminal activities.

New global developments in technology and the growth of the communications revolution, while facilitating freedom of movement across borders, have also created opportunities for extending the territorial scope for the perpetration of criminal activities thus expanding the global impact of drug trafficking and terrorism. The interlinkages among these create increasingly serious challenges to social, economic and political stability and the rule of law. This demands a co-ordinated global response which gives priority to full international cooperation in strengthening the existing legal framework on all fronts and at all levels.

CARICOM Member States recognize the significance of these instruments in the global fight against transnational criminality. CARICOM therefore welcomes the adoption of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its additional Protocols and some states in the region have signed these instruments in recognition of their commitment to the principles they embody. In this context we look forward to close cooperation with the Centre for International Crime Prevention which has continued to provide assistance to Member States in undertaking the necessary steps leading to the ratification of the instruments.

We welcome the efforts being carried out by the Centre in its ongoing efforts to promote the ratification process and urge increased contributions to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund which strengthens the capacity of States to give focus to these instruments as a matter of priority.

The conclusion of negotiations on the United Nations Convention against Corruption will mark a new milestone in the international community's efforts to formulate effective strategic responses to a practice which threatens global economic and social development. A number of States in the region are participating actively in the drafting process and look forward to the opening for

signature of the Convention in 2003. We would wish to emphasize, however, the importance of ensuring, as we conclude our negotiations in the coming months, that this instrument, while universally applicable, should take into account the legal, social, cultural, economic and political differences among countries.

Both transnational organised crime and the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs have had devastating consequences for small States in the Caribbean region. The region is especially affected by the transhipment of drugs given its geographic location. This illicit trade in narcotics, compounded by the illicit traffic in small arms continue to pose a serious threat to regional stability and state security. Both drugs and small arms represent for our region not only a grave challenge to the social fabric of our societies but also an attack on the regions most valuable resource- our human capital and by extension our prospect for growth and development.

Over the years, in response to this challenge, CARICOM has adopted several regional and bilateral initiatives in order to strengthen national capacities to address the problems arising from the demand for, supply of and traffic in illicit drugs. Both the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs have played key roles in supporting these initiatives and we therefore wish to place on record our appreciation for the valuable financial and technical assistance they have provided. We look forward to greater cooperation with both bodies particularly with respect to the continued joint elaboration of cooperative strategies with the CARICOM Secretariat's Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM).

Despite progress in recent years in elaborating effective responses to crime prevention and drug control, the region is acutely aware of the urgent need to strengthen its strategic policy framework and to continually enhance capacity. In order to facilitate this objective, CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Nassau , Bahamas in July 2001, at its Twenty-second Conference, established a Regional Task Force on Crime and Security. This Task Force has initiated a comprehensive examination of the interlinkages among crime, drugs and small arms in the region and has formulated several multi-sectoral strategies aimed at ensuring an integrated approach to these challenges. Among the major initiatives to be implemented are: the strengthening of law enforcement agencies through training, improved intelligence and information exchange and the establishment of a Regional Rapid Response Mechanism to support national investigative mechanisms.

The region is also in the process of establishing a Drug Control and Crime Prevention Commission and will take urgent steps to improve border controls and security systems and to strengthen regional maritime cooperation agreements. In this context, the establishment of a counter-terrorism plan of action, and a Pan Caribbean Partnership to engage the wider Caribbean in dialogue and discussion

in crafting a way forward in implementing action against drugs and small arms are among our major priorities.

The geophysical features of CARICOM Member States pose additional challenges in the fight against transnational crimes. In this regard, CARICOM is engaged in efforts to strengthen cooperation in maritime matters and has participated actively in the negotiations for a regional agreement for combating the illicit maritime and aeronautic trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances in the Caribbean. The agreement was elaborated pursuant to Article 17 of the Vienna Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances which calls on states to enter into such regional agreements. We are therefore pleased that the instrument has been successfully concluded and will be open for signature in Costa Rica in October of this year.

CARICOM States welcome the approval by ECOSOC at its 2002 session of the resolution entitled 'International Assistance to the States most affected by the transit of drugs.' Many of our small islands have unfortunately become pawns in the dangerous game played by drug traffickers. Transit states sit at the nexus of supply and demand, neither producing illicit drugs, nor serving as the final destinations for those drugs. Yet the spill over effects have a devastating impact on the societies and economies of such states, contributing to the rise of crime and levels of violence.. It also cannot be ignored that some of the illicit drugs bound for third countries inevitably are diverted into the transit states themselves, resulting in the rise of addiction and its attendant ills in those societies.

CARICOM States welcome the assistance provided by bilateral partners, regional and sub-regional organisations and at the international level to transit states, and call on the international community to continue its assistance to those countries that have, by virtue of their geographical location, become way stations in the international drug trade, and pay the price for it. CARICOM states also call for a redoubling of the international community's efforts in reducing supply of and demand for illicit drugs, in both the source and destination countries.

Drug demand reduction represents a critical element in the fight against illicit drugs. Without a balanced approach to both supply and demand reduction, the illicit trade in drugs cannot be effectively addressed. CARICOM therefore calls on States to give primary focus to the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles on Drug Demand Reduction and stresses the importance of meeting the 2003 targets for the adoption of new or enhanced drug demand reduction strategies.

Both the traffic in drugs and transnational organised crime threaten the sustainable development of States, the maintenance of law and order and personal security. Success in the fight against the world drug problem, while requiring strict efforts to ensure supply and demand reduction, also depends to a

significant degree on efforts to reduce poverty, social and economic disparities, and efforts to address development concerns arising from constraints to international trade. We are acutely aware of the fact that where global economic progress fails to benefit the majority,, where States are economically marginalized through lack of access to markets and where the flow of international capital bypasses those States whose capital base is unsustainable and severely limited, social dislocation, unemployment and economic stagnation are likely to fuel the traffic in drugs as an alternative source of income generation.

In this context, CARICOM would wish to stress that success in combating the drug trade requires action on all fronts including the revisiting of underlying international economic relations which affect the development prospect. As a preliminary step therefore , there is an urgent need to improve our understanding of the relationship between crime, the illicit trade in drugs, poverty and sustainable development. This clear interrelationship suggests that any success in the fight against drugs and crime will depend largely on the ability of States and the opportunities available to them to integrate themselves into the global economy in a manner that is consistent with their development priorities and which ensures that their populations benefit equitably from new opportunities for empowerment offered by the global economy.

In conclusion, while the drug problem and the growing negative impact of transnational organised crime, corruption and international terrorism continue to pose a serious threat to stability and to economic progress, the international community has at its disposal the tools to respond effectively to these threats. There can be no question, however, that achieving measurable results requires the highest level of international commitment and cooperation. The true test of this commitment however remains to be seen in the efforts we take in the coming years to fulfil the goals we have set.