



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

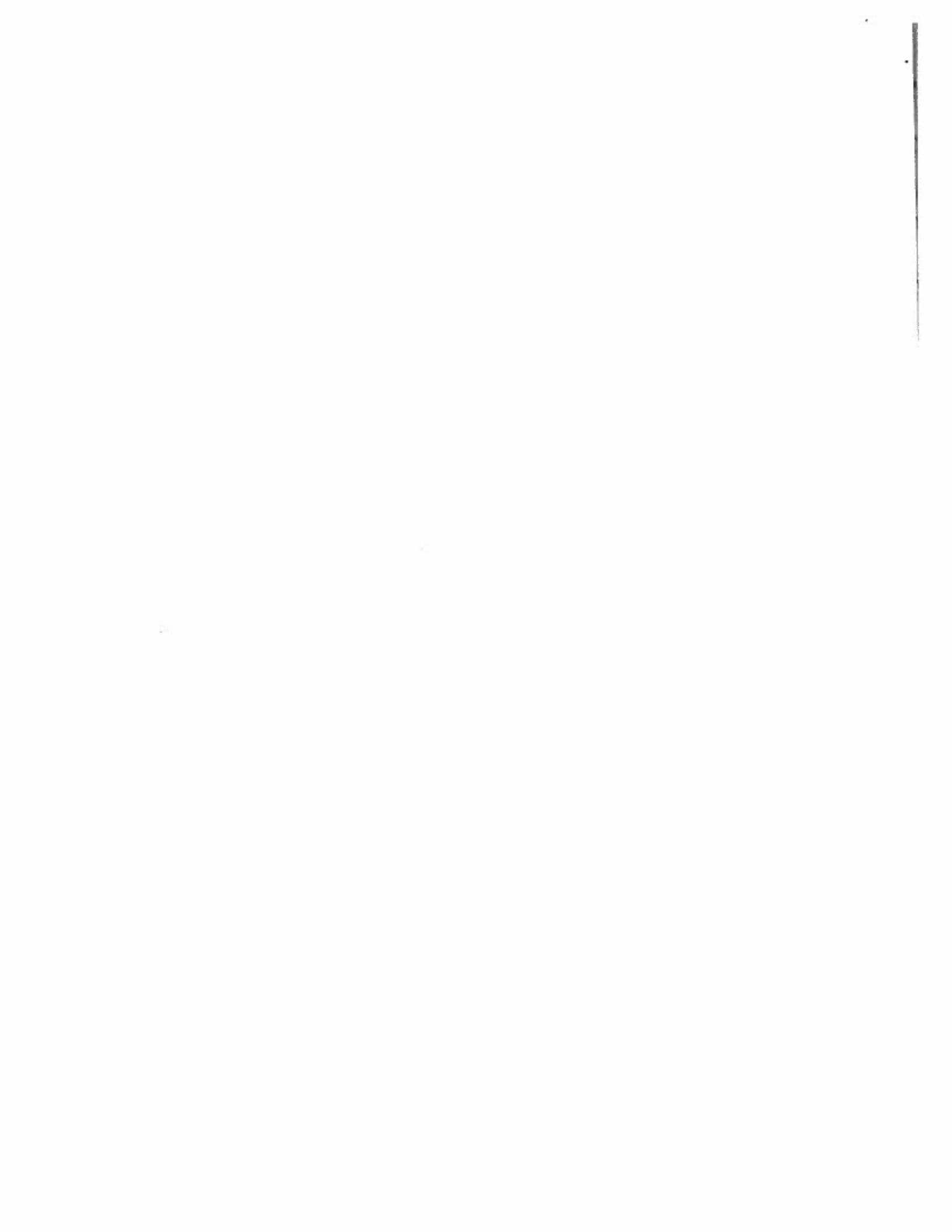
**H.E. COURTENAY RATTRAY
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

**SPECIAL BRIEFING ON THE UPCOMING SESSION OF
THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

NEW YORK

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Ambassador Amr Aboulatta
Ambassador Desra Percaya
Ms Yvonne Lodico

Let me begin by commending the Missions of Egypt and Indonesia in conjunction with UNITAR for organising this important briefing and thanking their Ambassadors for inviting me to address you today. As we embark on our month long deliberations, I anticipate that today's event will set the stage for a dynamic and productive session.

The Context

As was widely recognised during the General Debate that concluded last week, we embark on this 69th session at a time of great upheaval throughout the world, both in terms of inter-state and intra-state conflict. I was struck, therefore, by a certain incongruity as I participated yesterday in an event that celebrated the International Day for Non-Violence; a day in which so many lives continued to be lost as a result of the various hostilities that are raging throughout the world; fuelled by the weapons of war that are dedicated to controlling. Against this stark backdrop, I fully expect that our deliberations at this session will be animated by these global developments that have such a critical bearing on the issues on our Committee's agenda.

At the heart of this agenda are the concerns we harbour about the danger posed by the proliferation of both weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and the damage caused by the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. We need to make progress in both spheres as it relates to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Our focus on nuclear weapons was much in evidence during the high-level segment of the UNGA last week; firstly at the Ministerial-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. This event, which was held for the first time on 26 September 2014, is aimed at enhancing public awareness and providing education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons. It advocates for their total elimination, in the quest to mobilize international action towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Secondly, the Seventh Ministerial Meeting of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty continued the efforts being made to spur the early entry into force of this important treaty, which is aimed at retarding the development and qualitative improvement of these weapons by upholding the ban on nuclear weapon test explosions.

In as much as there is a keen and understandable focus on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot lose sight of the fact that small arms and light weapons kill an estimated 300,000 people worldwide each year. The 50th ratification of the ATT last Thursday has provided the basis for its entry into force at the end of this year and is expected to contribute to our efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of SALW, which has wreaked havoc in many parts of the world and caused immense human suffering. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated, "The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all

other weapons systems...In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as 'weapons of mass destruction'.

Many of the conflicts currently underway involve by protagonists that embody a variety of non-state actors whose nefarious activities are fuelled by transfers of conventional weapons. As the Security Council has recognised, these factional groups, terrorists, militias and renegade bands of criminals pose a serious threat. These activities will undoubtedly be a test for the ATT.

Role of the First Committee

It is within the multilateral arena that sovereign states are able to organise themselves in a manner that provides an opportunity to advance their national interest, through negotiations that often result in the establishment of international standard and norms. Indeed, some of the intractable problems faced by the international community have been resolved through the interplay between delegations holding vastly divergent views, but who sit across the table from each other within a structure that is designed to facilitate their fruitful exchanges and to ultimately arrive at solutions.

The First Committee represents such an arena. Moreover, its subject areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control strike at the very heart of the international peace and security mandate that is embodied in the UN Charter. I submit that there can be no greater goal than that which involves our collective quest for global peace and security.

The strength of the Main Committees, including the First Committee is that they form the core of a General Assembly that is and of itself the single most representative multilateral organ. As such, its legitimacy is unquestioned and its deliberations carry the force of our collective will.

The Committee's role encompasses the full gamut of issues in the field of disarmament, including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the regulation of conventional armaments.

I see my role as chairman as facilitating, to the extent possible, an environment within which delegations can engage in a dynamic inter-play of ideas and negotiate their respective policy positions. The importance of the subjects handled by the First Committee is unique in the degree to which it utilises voting procedures to advance the issues on its agenda. This is wholly understandable, as the subjects on which we deliberate concern vital national and international security interests. The challenge for the chair and the bureau therefore, is to exert a level of organisational management that maximises the use of the limited time allocated, while at the same time respecting the full right of each member state to ventilate their position.

There has been a positive trend in the Committee towards providing more in-depth consideration of the various issues, including through its thematic/structured discussions and by increasing the number of speakers, particularly in the nuclear weapons, conventional weapons and disarmament machinery clusters.

There is still, however, room to further improve the working methods of the Committee. Member states have been vocal in proposing different methods of enhancing the efficiency of their work. In this respect, I have had an opportunity, over the past two months, to engage in extensive informal consultations with all regional and political groups both here in New York as well as in Geneva.

One issue that has become clear is that we need to do more to reduce the number of resolutions, which could be accomplished by expanding the use of biennial and triennial resolutions. We also perceive a need to ensure that delegations utilise the maximum amount of time allocated for consultations amongst themselves, which are geared towards promoting greater consensus-building; a critical undertaking when negotiating the more contentious resolutions, especially those dealing with nuclear weapon issues.

Another area identified for improvement relates to the use of panels in the thematic debate. An attempt has been made over the past few years to inject a degree of interactivity into the panel segment. However, it is widely recognised that there are still improvements that can be made and together with my Bureau we will be actively addressing these concerns during this 69th session. As mentioned this morning during the Committee's organisational meeting, the Bureau has proposed a sub-theme for the first panel on which a concept paper will be circulated to delegations ahead of the panel discussion. We hope this will stimulate greater interaction and I reiterate my call for delegations to more actively engage with the panellists.

We are also seized of the concerns expressed by NGO representatives for enhancing their contribution to the work of the Committee. While we are not able to accommodate their request during this session, we hope that at the 70th Session they will have an opportunity to make their intervention at the end of the General Debate, as obtains at the NPT Review conferences.

At the macro level, one issue for the First Committee's consideration is a determination of how best to engineer its operations, so that it is able to quickly adapt to the rapidly emerging and changing nature of today's security challenges. These comprise non-traditional new actors and advanced weaponry and weapons systems that utilise ICT and satellite technology. At the same time, I am mindful that most of the conflicts that we see today present challenges that are based on traditional technologies being utilised in non-traditional ways.

Allow me to conclude by citing some of the areas that I believe that will generate the active consideration of the membership. These include the new the Russian draft resolution on "No first placement of weapons in outer space".

In the background of our deliberations, issues relating to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, in particular the pressing issue of the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the Humanitarian Initiative will be prominent.

Let me close by reiterating my commitment to being accessible, inclusive and transparent. I am comforted by the assurances I have received of your support

and cooperation. With this support, I am confident that I will be able to effectively fulfil the duties of the chair in achieving our common objectives.

