



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

STATEMENT BY

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IN THE

**FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE
70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
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Mr. Chairman,

I join other delegations in warmly congratulating you and the members of the Bureau on your election. Yours is the challenging task of facilitating our exchange and action on vital and complex issues affecting international peace and security. We are confident that your skill will bring the work of this important committee to a successful conclusion. I offer you Jamaica's full cooperation and support.

Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of CARICOM.

Mr. Chairman,

Seventy years ago when the United Nations was established in the wake of the Second World War, it was with the lofty goal to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". To this end, the Charter established the framework for a system of collective security based on the prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the formation of multilateral institutions for giving practical effect to these principles. The progressive reduction of armaments and the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament are of utmost significance in realizing the noble goal on which this Organization was founded.

During this 70th anniversary session of the First Committee, it is also important that we acknowledge and reaffirm these general principles as the foundation of our efforts. No matter what may be the challenges and the perceived realities of the moment, the promotion of disarmament must play a central role in the United Nations' efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the seriousness of the challenge we face. While we have avoided a war of global scale over the past seventy years, today we face increasingly complex, interconnected threats to our peace and security. In the international situation, new challenges have surfaced as a result of acts of terrorism and violent extremism.

This is combined with the persistence of conflicts, regional rivalries and disputes that continually raise the spectre of wide-scale war. The Secretary-General's report on the Organisation (doc.A/70/1) records some alarming developments in which millions of people are engulfed by conflict and crisis, most notably in the Middle East and North Africa.

Transnational organised crime and the presence of weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten international peace and security, while the proliferation of conventional arms in the hands of non-state actors poses a grave risk to many countries and regions.

These factors paint a disheartening picture of the current international situation, where there is serious risk of us losing further ground in our disarmament efforts. These developments have direct implications for the work of this Committee, for where there is war, there is unquenched demand for the weapons of war. Our responsibility is to ensure that by virtue of the regimes and arrangements to which we adhere, by our demonstrated commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and through genuine efforts to promote confidence-building by way of transparency and verification of action, we will ultimately create a safer world for ourselves, and for generations to come.

The chronic stalemate at the political and diplomatic levels justifies our feelings of concern and discouragement, but should not give rise to cynicism or undue pessimism. But, how do we respond to the growing perception that disarmament and arms control are the neglected goals of the UN; that the UN cannot deliver on its disarmament commitments? In our view, we must continue to pursue our disarmament efforts relentlessly and with perseverance. To do otherwise cannot represent a viable option.

It is now time for us to consider how best to reinvigorate our efforts through new and alternative approaches to advance disarmament goals. This should include a possible change in the manner in which decisions are taken by different parts of the disarmament machinery. At the same time, we are painfully aware that the real challenge lies in exercising the political will

and commitment to achieve our stated goals and objectives; for to ever gain consensus on amending the decision-making rules will require commitment at the political level. To do so, we need to rebuild trust and confidence among ourselves.

The Humanitarian approach which is gaining momentum can inject new life and urgency into what is currently a moribund process. This approach, we believe, will allow us to be more ambitious and progressive and to bring onboard more diverse actors. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General's timely observation that "the more we understand about the humanitarian impacts, the more it becomes clear that we must pursue disarmament as an urgent imperative".

The Secretary-General's insightful observation is particularly relevant to the priority area of nuclear disarmament, where the recent focus by a growing number of States and civil society groups on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is helping to reinvigorate this stalled agenda. Jamaica welcomes the Humanitarian initiative, which reflects our strong desire for progress on the nuclear disarmament pillar. From our standpoint, there is no alternative to the total and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

We are deeply disappointed that the international community failed to seize the opportunity provided by the 2015 NPT Review Conference to make significant progress on its commitment to rid the world of nuclear weapons. For far too long we have been locked in a cycle of intense frustration over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. Yet, forty-five years after the entry into force of the NPT and twenty-five years after its indefinite extension, some are prevailing on us to persist with the flawed step-by-step approach, as the only realistic way to achieve our common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. However, these incremental steps have not proved successful in advancing our disarmament goals.

Jamaica therefore supports the strong call made before, during and after the 2015 NPT Review Conference, for the negotiation and adoption of a legally-binding instrument for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, which is embodied in the recent Humanitarian Pledge endorsed by 119 States. The time has come for us to cease considering nuclear weapons only through the narrow lens of state security and instead pay due attention to the humanitarian aspect, as a first step to filling the glaring legal gap that exists in the absence of an explicit prohibition of these weapons. Moreover, this important Session of the First Committee cannot ignore the Humanitarian Initiative. It must be placed firmly on our agenda.

Jamaica cannot conclude its remarks on this particular area without reference to the conclusion of the historic nuclear agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 countries. That an agreement of such complexity and political sensitivity could have been forged at all, moreover within the time-frame that was established, serves as a measure of the seriousness with which the negotiators and their respective governments addressed the task. We mentioned previously the importance of securing political will to surmount seemingly intractable problems and this represents a prime example of what can be accomplished when States are dedicated to diplomacy backed by political will.

Mr. Chairman,

I turn now to a matter of immediate concern to Jamaica, the proliferation of firearms of every description. This is a feature of our world today that endangers the lives of ordinary citizens, undermines the rule of law, threatens economic and social stability and fuels violent crime. We renew our demand that those who manufacture such weapons exercise greater controls and support anti-proliferation efforts. The Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force less than a year ago, can make a significant contribution to such efforts.

We were indeed proud to join other States Parties, Signatory States, Observer States, inter-governmental organisations and civil society groups that gathered in Mexico at the end of

August for the First Conference of States Parties, which laid the foundation for the full and effective implementation of the ATT.

Nevertheless, we cannot rest on a successful first conference. States Parties now need to put in the hard work to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of the Treaty at the national, regional and international levels, through cooperation and greater efforts aimed at capacity building. In this connection, universal adherence will be key to the success of our action. Let us therefore continue to work towards universal participation in this very important instrument, as only then will it be able to achieve its full potential. We therefore encourage those States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty at the earliest opportunity.

The ATT and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons are mutually reinforcing. The PoA, which remains the focal point for our efforts towards eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, requires our attention now more than ever. While we witnessed a successful conclusion of the Second Open-ended Group Meeting of Governmental Experts, held this year with its consideration of new technologies, we must now look towards setting an ambitious agenda for the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) in June 2016.

As we move towards the Third Review Conference of the PoA in 2018, Jamaica looks forward to BMS6 as an important opportunity to reinvigorate the PoA process. As Member States, we each need to ensure that we are making real progress in the implementation of the PoA at the national level, while strengthening the measures for inter-state cooperation and capacity building.

Mr. Chairman, a few days ago our leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the most comprehensive, universal global agenda for sustainable development the world has yet seen. The deliberations and work of this Committee and the rest of the disarmament machinery cannot be divorced from this transformative agenda, for as we know development without peace and security is short-lived.

Indeed, in the context of huge global military expenditures, the link between disarmament and development merits our serious attention. The figures are indeed startling. Roughly 1.7 trillion dollars is now spent annually on weapons and military equipment of all kinds, consuming a massive share of the world's financial resources. As a Small Island Developing State, we are of the view that now more than ever is the opportune time to redirect significant portions of these funds to aid global development initiatives and poverty eradication strategies in 2030 Development Agenda, where the scale of resources that required also measure in the trillions.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

As we undertake our work in this historic session of the First Committee, let us renew our commitment to move actively forwards towards the achievement of disarmament, development and the strengthening of international peace and security.

I thank you.