



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

CLOSING REMARKS BY

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AND

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**SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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As we conclude the main part of the sixty-ninth session of the First Committee, I should like to make a final statement in my capacity as Chair.

At the outset, allow me to warmly commend the entire membership of this Committee and each and every representative for the cordial, constructive and cooperative atmosphere evidenced during the past four weeks of intensive discussions. I particularly welcome the intellectual rigour and seriousness of purpose with which delegations approached their work during the period.

This year the Committee completed its work in four weeks, with 24 meetings. A record-breaking 107 statements were made within the General Debate segment, compared with between 98 and 101 in recent years. In relation to the Thematic Discussions segment, the trend towards a growing number of speakers continued, especially in the nuclear weapons cluster where a record-breaking 70 speakers made interventions, compared with 59, 52, 45 and 37 in the 68th to 65th sessions respectively. In terms of draft resolutions, this 69th Session adopted 63 draft texts, of which 57 were draft resolutions and 6 draft decisions. This represents the largest number over the last 10 years. A little over half of these were adopted without a vote.

Permit me to now make some comments on the substantive issues that featured on the Committee's agenda during the sixty-ninth session. Without exception, this year's deliberations continued to accord priority attention to the world's deadliest weapons of mass destruction, particularly the most lethal and indiscriminate of all, nuclear weapons. Member States continued to underscore the need to abide by and accelerate nuclear disarmament commitments and to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The Committee was particularly seized of the importance of a successful 2015 NPT Review Conference, with many States putting forward proposals that could contribute to such an outcome. Regrettably, the divergence in views on how to move forward on the complex issue of nuclear disarmament continued to characterize and stymie these deliberations. While recognizing the core national and international security concerns that form the crux of the various positions taken on these

matters, I very much hope that these discordant views will not continue to prevent the consensus that is so urgently needed.

Notably, as momentum builds towards renewed efforts to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, many States have made strong calls for addressing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

Our Committee once again recognized the important contribution of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones as the second front of nuclear disarmament and an important pillar in the promotion of regional security and stability. It welcomed, in several resolutions, the signing of the protocols to the Central Asian Nuclear-weapon-free-zone and adopted a resolution convening the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones and Mongolia in 2015. The lack of progress surrounding the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was a matter of serious concern during the deliberations, as was evidenced in the calls for the urgent convening of the Conference on its establishment.

There is no doubt that all delegations take very seriously the threat that weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of non-state actors, in particular terrorist organizations. In this regard, delegations have not failed to highlight the importance of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, and reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of universalizing these instruments and to full compliance with their provisions. The Committee also commended the almost complete elimination of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles of the Syrian Arab Republic, and highlighted the joint UN-OPCW mission as the model for how the international community should respond, within the multilateral framework, to such grave breaches of international law.

Issues relating to conventional weapons were well represented on the agenda and positively discussed. Notably, the Committee welcomed the 50th ratification of the historic Arms Trade

Treaty, which will allow for its entry into force on 24th December 2014. I fully share the sentiments expressed by one delegation that the ATT “is a victory for the world’s people” with real potential to eradicate the illicit arms trade and genuinely contribute to humanitarian objectives. Importantly, many States have stressed the importance of ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Treaty’s provisions, as well as promoting its universalisation. The upcoming First Conference of States Parties in 2015 is of significance, as it will provide an opportunity to discuss the Treaty’s implementation, functioning and efficacy.

Delegates also engaged in the consideration of the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, particularly in relation to the full and effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action; and on measures taken to regulate and prevent the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

The Committee took up other subjects that have profound implications for our common future, including the placement of weapons in outer space, the impact of information and communication technology on international security, the relationship between disarmament and development, disarmament and non-proliferation education, women and disarmament, and regional cooperation. In the sphere of outer space, the Committee has sought to implement one of the recommendations emanating from last year’s report of the Group of Governmental Experts, by agreeing to convene a joint ad-hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees to review the issue of substantive transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

The Committee heard from several delegations, which called for the need to urgently address the malign application of information and communication technology in facilitating cyber warfare. They also called for ICT to be exclusively used for peaceful purposes. Delegations also underscored the need to further examine the application of international law in this area, together with developing transparency and confidence-building measures.

Emerging issues did not escape the scrutiny of the Committee, one of which was the use of fully autonomous weapons. We heard concerns expressed that these weapons systems, which are facilitated by artificial intelligence, posed serious ethical questions and elicited fundamental concerns related to their compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. Another emerging issue that was debated surrounded the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and the attendant humanitarian harm caused to civilians.

I believe that one of the most urgent messages that rang out loud and clear from the deliberations and draft resolutions of the First Committee this year is the need to revitalize the disarmament machinery, which is in danger of losing both its credibility and relevance. Let us do our utmost to make this happen by taking a fresh approach to addressing the structural rigidities that hamper work in the Conference on Disarmament, while renewing our commitment to achieve consensus in the UN Disarmament Commission. Indeed, strong efforts have been made during the course of this Session of the First Committee to break the 15-year deadlock in the UNDC and create the conditions for a productive triennial cycle, as reflected in the draft resolution that has been adopted. As has been said by the UNDC's outgoing Chairman, the Commission cannot continue under the present rules of engagement.

Given the summary I have just made, I ask the question whether our Committee has advanced the cause of disarmament and international security through its work? It is up to each delegation, and certainly for outside observers above all, to evaluate our performance. Undoubtedly, differences persist within the Committee, particularly on the questions relating to nuclear weapons. However, we must appreciate, and it is encouraging to note, the positive and constructive tone of our discussions. Let us, therefore, build upon areas of consensus and work together to iron out differences. I hope that this will provide the fertile ground upon which to make progress in future discussions and negotiations on questions of disarmament.

As you are all aware, 2015 will not only mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, but is also an important year for the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We should not

squander this opportunity, but work to fulfill the Charter's noble goal of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, by reducing and eliminating the means to wage war.

Before concluding my remarks, I should like say a few words about the organizational aspects of the Committee's work. We continue to confront the question of how the Committee can better organise itself to manage its time more efficiently and cover the issues on its agenda. It is clear from this year's session that we need to figure out how best to facilitate the growing number of speakers wishing to take the floor, particularly in the nuclear weapons and conventional weapons clusters. I intend to facilitate an informal session at which the Committee can further examine how best to accomplish this.

The Committee has continued its practice of enabling the constructive participation of our civil society partners at the end of the thematic discussions. We highly value the expertise, diversity of perspectives, and overall contribution of civil society in developing and promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control norms. However, I believe we can enhance their contribution to our annual deliberations and to this end, I have taken the liberty of submitting a proposal for the Membership to consider moving their intervention to the end of the general debate. In this connection, I will convene informal consultations on 20 November to receive your views on this proposal.

In conclusion, I express my profound thanks and deep gratitude to all members of the Committee for the cooperation, support, advice and above all understanding you have extended to me personally and as the Chair of this Committee throughout the session. Without your abundance of goodwill, flexibility and serious-minded participation we could not have achieved a productive session. It has indeed been a distinct honour and pleasure to serve as your Chair and, together with my stellar Bureau, to have facilitated the work of the Committee at this session. I have enjoyed every moment of it.

I cannot fail to underscore and express appreciation for the excellent working atmosphere that prevailed at all times within the First Committee Bureau. The members of the Bureau have

given their absolute cooperation and made themselves fully available. I, therefore, thank the Vice-Chairs, Saad Abdullah Al Saad of Saudi Arabia, Narcisa Vlădulescu of Romania, Maria Victoria González Román of Spain, and our Rapporteur Saada Hassan of Djibouti, for their support.

I might add that this is the first occasion on which the majority of the First Committee's Bureau is comprised of women.

On behalf of the Committee, I express my most sincere appreciation to the Office of Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, headed by High Representative Angela Kane and Under-Secretary-General Tege Gettu respectively, for their support and dedicated staff, who facilitated our work in every possible way.

I cannot fail but to say a special word of thanks to Mr. Ioan Tudor, Special Assistant to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, whose expertise on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues, I have relied upon from the very outset of my involvement in this Committee. His willingness to share his knowledge, coupled with his graciousness and sheer good naturedness has made him a delight for me to work with.

I would also like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kenji Nakano and his excellent team at the First Committee Secretariat (Alexander, Jullyette, Dino, Lidija, Gerard, Victor, Tomas, Janett, Ciyeon and Geoffrey) for their tireless and considerate efforts to support and facilitate our work throughout the session. Mr. Nakano's understated but assured and knowledgeable presence was of great value and much appreciated. His unflappable 'no-drama' style is ideally suited to the requirements of the vital position he occupies.

Special thanks go to all the interpreters, translators, record-keepers, press officers, document officers, conference officers and sound engineers, who have worked diligently behind the scenes in support of the Committee's work.

Allow me once again to thank my regional group, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, for having trusted me to Chair the work of the First Committee and for their demonstration of unstinting support.

The First Committee will reconvene next year, sometime in early summer, to elect its Chair for the historic seventieth session of the General Assembly. Let me conclude by wishing all those who are leaving New York a safe trip back home.

I close with a quote from former Secretary- General Kofi Anan:

“For the United Nations, there is no goal more overriding, no commitment more compelling, no aspiration more profound than the prevention of armed conflict. Ensuring human security, in the broadest sense, is the United Nations’ cardinal mission.”