



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 57TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

BY

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[Final Text]

Mr. Chairman

There is no greater duty to be performed by the United Nations than the maintenance of international peace and security and this gives particular importance to the work of the First Committee. The Charter establishes the framework for a system of collective security based on the prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and for the functioning of multilateral institutions for enforcing these principles. The progressive reduction of armaments and the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament are of utmost significance in realizing these objectives.

We believe it is important that these general principles be reaffirmed as the foundation for 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 of the United Nations' efforts to promote peace and cooperation among states.

But to begin with, we should acknowledge the seriousness of the problems we face. In the international situation, new challenges have surfaced as a result of acts of international terrorism and the military responses which have introduced new dimensions to perceptions of international security which naturally would have an impact on the disarmament agenda. This is combined with the persistence of conflicts particularly in the Middle East and of some regional rivalries and disputes which continually raise the spectre of war. At the diplomatic level, progress is stalled by the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament which regrettably had nothing to report beyond the continuance of consultations over its programme of work.

All of this is not encouraging and in the current international situation, there is serious risk of losing ground in disarmament efforts within an atmosphere increasingly conducive to militarism. World military expenditures have been increasing since 1998, reversing the trend of reduction over the previous 10 years. For the year 2001 there was a significant increase which is even expected to exceed the estimate provided by SIPRI of 839 billion US dollars. SIPRI notes that important changes in the size and structure of the armaments industry have occurred since the early nineties resulting from increased concentration and internationalization of arms production; an increased level of privatization and commercialization and an increased emphasis on exports to compensate for reduced domestic procurement. These are consistent with overall trends in globalization which increases the danger of proliferation from the reduced transparency and accountability which make export controls more difficult.

Mr. Chairman

These developments at the political, diplomatic and commercial levels justify feelings of concern and discouragement but should not give rise to cynicism or undue pessimism. We should continue to pursue our disarmament efforts relentlessly and with perseverance. We should build on what has already been achieved by careful and systematic implementation of existing agreements. In the priority area of nuclear disarmament, renewed efforts should be made at the political level to bring into force

the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. There is need for a new momentum and greater public awareness should be aroused to bring pressure for moving this process forward., especially in relation to ratification by the nuclear powers. Jamaica will be doing its part by the hosting of a regional seminar for Caribbean and Latin American States in December of this year to help to promote universal adherence to the CTBT. These initiatives are important for the strengthening of an effective non-proliferation regime where already some progress has been made. But more needs to be done by the nuclear powers who have clear responsibilities and obligations to fulfill under the NPT and in implementation of the commitments agreed at the 2000 Review Conference. This would give greater assurance to non-nuclear states and reduce security concerns about the possible use of nuclear weapons.

I take the opportunity here to welcome the decision by the Government of Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is an important step which will promote regional solidarity in disarmament and is an act of faith in the international security system.

With regard to chemical and biological weapons, we should continue to develop and refine the verification arrangements which will further promote even greater confidence in the effectiveness of these agreements.

Mr. Chairman

It has now been a little over one year since the convening of that important United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

The urgency for effective implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference continues to be emphasized by CARICOM Member States. The provision of material and technical support for training and monitoring mechanisms to control the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons assumes greater importance every day. It is increasingly clear that the inter-linkage between the traffic in illicit arms and light weapons, the drug trade, terrorism and organized crime poses serious challenges to social security, stability and economic development in the CARICOM sub-region.

We need an effective regime to control the supply of small arms to developing countries and in particular to countries in situations of conflict. Of great concern is the inadequacy of existing regulation and the relative ease with which small arms can be bought and sold and enter the contraband trade. CARICOM therefore continues to support the establishment of a system of transfer controls in the jurisdiction of the producer countries which would allow for registration and the marking and tracing of weapons sold.

The work undertaken by the Department of Disarmament Affairs in conjunction with other relevant United Nations departments and agencies in the implementation of the Programme of Action has been significant. We particularly welcome the intention expressed by the Department to establish a Small Arms Advisory Service to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Special mention should also be made of the work undertaken by the Regional Centre for Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has been active in its promotion of the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is hoped that the necessary resources will be found to continue its work.

Mr. Chairman

CARICOM continues to call for the cessation of the trans-shipment of irradiated material through the Caribbean Sea. We continue to place emphasis on the conclusions and recommendations of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT on this issue. At the same time, while recognizing the right of states to the peaceful uses of nuclear material, we believe that the time is now opportune for the international community to consider the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework to promote state responsibility in areas dealing with disclosure, liability and compensation in the event of accidents during such trans-shipments.

Mr. Chairman

Let me once again reiterate the importance of a coordinated response to the issues present on our agenda. There is need for a renewed commitment to negotiations and to an avoidance of political polarization which stymies progress. We owe it to successive generations to move forward actively towards the achievement of disarmament, development and the strengthening of international peace and security.

In relation to the machinery for carrying forward the disarmament agenda, there is need to review its functioning and to come to some more acceptable arrangements for disarmament negotiations. The current deadlock has to be broken, especially in relation to the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and on the issue of enlargement. In addition, we should make greater use of the Disarmament Commission as a forum within the United Nations to deliberate on issues on the disarmament agenda.

In light of all the current issues affecting disarmament, a review of progress and of existing institutional arrangements is needed. We therefore believe it is important that a decision be taken during this General Assembly for the convening of a Fourth Special Session on Disarmament and for the necessary preparatory arrangements to be made.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, allow me to convey the congratulations of the CARICOM delegations on your election to chair this Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of our delegations with you and your Bureau as you carry out your responsibilities. Allow me also to express our appreciation to Mr. Dhanapala and the staff of the Department of Disarmament Affairs for their dedication reflected in the high standard of their work in the cause of disarmament.

Thank you.

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