



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**before the First Committee of  
the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of  
the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**

**in the General Debate on**

***“Disarmament and International Security”***

*New York, October 12, 2001*

***(Please check against delivery)***

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen states of the Caribbean Community that are members of the United Nations. This is a proud day for the United Nations. Our Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the organization as a whole, have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their contribution to the betterment of international peace and security. On behalf of CARICOM, let me congratulate the Secretary-General and the staff of the Organization for their signal contribution to the cause of peace.

Mr. Chairman,

This award comes at a time when the horrendous acts of terrorism committed on September 11 have left us all shaken and infinitely more aware of our vulnerability and the fragility of international security and the need for collective action in the face of unspeakable crimes, orchestrated with tools of everyday civilian life. We dare not contemplate the implication for the security of states at the possibility of weapons of mass destruction reaching the hands of unprincipled sponsors of international terrorism who show no respect for human life nor the rule of law.

It is our hope that, in the wake of these tragic events, the work of this Committee will be imbued with renewed urgency. We have witnessed over the past year an ebb in the energy and optimism that infused the Committee's consideration of measures to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime during the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. At that time, we celebrated the small but significant achievements of the Sixth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty that secured the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear weapon states for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and we echoed the Declaration of the Millennium Summit that called for concerted action toward the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

We have, however, not seen those rallying words transformed into demonstrable action; we still stand short of achievement of universality in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; we still anticipate the entry into force of the CTBT; the Conference on Disarmament has yet again failed to reach agreement to begin negotiation on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty; and we still pursue security assurances and confidence-building measures to strengthen the regime for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This stalled multilateral disarmament agenda presents a disturbing framework within which we must seek to advance an already tenuous international peace and security. It offers little comfort, particularly to small states such as our own, for the void created by the absence of a strong multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime is inevitably filled by suspicion and distrust, negating confidence-building measures and heightening the intimidation of lawlessness from state and non-state actors.

This threat is true not only for nuclear weapons but for biological and chemical weapons also. We share the concerns expressed at the inability of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons to advance its work on the elaboration of a draft Protocol on verification arrangements. It is our hope that the upcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will

contribute towards strengthening this regime, thus reducing the threat posed by such weapons.

We also look forward to participating actively in the Conference Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman,

Our non-proliferation and disarmament agenda will not advance meaningfully until the inertia in the Conference on Disarmament is removed. It is disconcerting to receive year after year report of the failure of this important body to agree on a programme of work, precluding substantive consideration of the nuclear disarmament agenda. It is also disappointing that, in the debate of this Committee, there is rarely mention of the value in convening a Fourth Special Session devoted to Disarmament.

Should we, then, conclude that political will is exhausted and we have lost our way? Recent events do not afford us that option. We should instead make good of this opportunity to renew our collective commitment to both nuclear and conventional nonproliferation and disarmament. We welcome the contribution of the Disarmament Commission to this effort through its current deliberation on 'Ways and Means to Achieve Nuclear Disarmament', and on 'Practical Confidence-building Measures in the Field of Conventional Arms'. We consider that this body can, and should play a more integral supportive role as a deliberative forum within the disarmament infrastructure of this organization.

CARICOM states also recognize the important contribution of nuclear weapon-free zones toward strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and in promoting regional security and stability. We maintain that their success is to be found in their establishment on the basis of agreements freely reached among the states of the region concerned. We remain committed to the regime established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco to which we are party and encourage the development of mechanisms aimed at promoting cooperation among zones, with a view to ultimately strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairman,

This year's endeavour has not been without success. Of particular importance to CARICOM states was the convening of the International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This meeting was very welcome demonstration of the international community's acknowledgement of the need to urgently address the proliferation and illegal use of these weapons. For small, vulnerable states such as ours, exposed to this illicit trade, often linked to drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, this was a vital undertaking. The increasing threat to the security and stability of our societies and the challenge to our economic and social development are too serious to ignore.

CARICOM states use this opportunity to again express their appreciation to Ambassador Camillo Reyes, President of the Conference, and to Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos, Chairman of the Prepcom, for their skillful management of a sensitive process.

We now look forward to early implementation of measures at the national, regional and international levels articulated in the Programme of Action, so as to strengthen the global collective effort to stem the flow of these illegal weapons, and to rid our societies of their deadly influence. We share the view, however, that the outcome of this Conference represents a first, important step in the long journey toward the achievement of truly effective control of this illicit trade. That objective, we believe, will not be attained until we implement measures to regulate the legal trade in small arms and light weapons, including the improved monitoring of firearms dealers and secondary markets, the application of more rigorous standards for arms brokers, and strict import and export authorization regimes.

Within this framework, we believe that there is a central role for the Secretariat to play in coordinating all United Nations activities concerning small arms. In this context, we welcome the important role that the Department of Disarmament Affairs, through its Coordinating Mechanism for Action on Small Arms (CASA), continues to play in ensuring regular consultation and coordination among all entities within the United Nations system for which the matter of small arms is an integral concern.

CARICOM states recommend that these existing mechanisms be strengthened to enhance in-house capacity to undertake more research and analysis on the nature and scope of the problem, and to provide practical assistance to affected states. There is still a paucity of data on the small arms phenomenon. We recommend that institutions like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) be strengthened, with a view to widening the database of information on small arms.

We also note that the United Nations continues to experience difficulty in recruiting disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. This need could be addressed in part by encouraging governments to establish databases of expertise on disarmament to enhance the United Nations' capacity when the need arises.

These initiatives would, of course, demand additional resources, both human and financial. CARICOM states were therefore very disappointed that the outcome of the 2001 Conference did not see specific commitment to the investment of new and additional resources, for implementation of the Programme of Action. Without the injection of fresh resources, our efforts will be significantly compromised. We encourage better coordination among existing small arms funds, to ensure maximisation of the impact of these resources. We also consider that it would be useful to explore the possibility of working more closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to identify areas in which its trust fund for support of prevention and reduction in the proliferation of small arms which involves a *"weapons for development"* approach can be of assistance in the disarmament component of peacekeeping operations.

We continue to participate actively in regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of our states to more effectively control the illegal arms trade and narco-trafficking. Where our sub-region is concerned, we cannot contemplate solutions to the illicit arms trade without addressing at the same time measures to control the illegal drug trade. Many of these activities are implemented under the sponsorship of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, often in cooperation with the UN International Drug Control Programme and the Inter-

American Drug Abuse Commission of the OAS. We again use this opportunity to convey our appreciation for the support we receive from these institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM states also note with satisfaction the steady progress achieved in the decreased production of anti-personnel landmines; in the destruction of stockpiles; in the de-mining of land; and in the reduction of casualties from landmine blasts. We consider this an encouraging indication of member states' commitment to full implementation of this Convention, made all the more worthy for its overwhelming humanitarian benefit. We continue to call for more assistance to those states addressing the difficult task of de-mining, and for the support of victims of landmine explosions.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM states will continue to raise in the debate of this Committee their apprehension regarding the safety and environmental risks to which coastal states are exposed by the maritime transportation of nuclear waste and other radioactive material. We place great store on the conclusions and recommendations of the Sixth NPT Review Conference year regarding the strengthening of measures and international regulations to protect states from such risks.

The transshipment of irradiated material through the Caribbean Sea is of particular concern. We continue to call for the cessation of this practice. This position notwithstanding, we again underscore the need for the international community to consider the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework promoting state responsibility in such areas as disclosure, liability and compensation in relation to accidents.

Mr. Chairman,

Once again we have been offered the opportunity to refocus the disarmament agenda. If we are to move forward, we will have to do so together. This will mean that we must, somehow, find the political will to eschew polarization in the disarmament debate, and find common ground on which to renew our dialogue. In the search to achieve disarmament and international peace and security, the words of eminent Caribbean scholar, Sir Shridath Ramphal ring true:

'cooperation is no longer merely an option; it is a pre-condition of life in the global neighbourhood. It is not just a strategic choice; it is a compulsion of civilized existence.'

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me convey our congratulations to you and to the members of your Bureau, on your election to guide the work of this important Committee. I assure you of the full cooperation of our delegations as you discharge your responsibilities.

May I also express our appreciation to the Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala and the staff of his Department for their dedication, demonstrated in the consistently high quality of their work.

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