



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**NPT 2000 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
THE TREATY ON THE
NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

ON BEHALF OF

THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

May 2, 2000

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen states parties, members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The CARICOM States join other delegations in congratulating you on your assumption of the challenging assignment as President of the Conference. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau, including those who will guide the work of the Main Committees and Subsidiary Bodies over the coming weeks. We offer you our fullest cooperation and support as you discharge your responsibilities.

Mr. President,

The international community has gathered at this meeting to review the NPT thirty years after its adoption; to examine progress towards strengthening its review process; to assess the integrity of its vision and objective in light of international experience and action since the indefinite extension of the treaty in 1995.

Many have approached this conference with a strong sense of foreboding and frustration. Indeed, the statements which we have heard over the past week clearly reflect the concern of the international community at the disappointing lack of progress on the multilateral disarmament agenda; concerns we fully share.

This meeting, nevertheless, presents an important opportunity for us to set the framework and to redirect action so that we can move closer to the principal objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament envisaged by the NPT regime. These objectives are an essential pre-condition for the attainment of international peace and security.

The task ahead of us is such an urgent one that we dare not tarry in recollection of disappointments of the past. Rather, we must use them as inventory in an aggressive strategy aimed at strengthening the NPT regime. We should, therefore, only look back with a view to finding our way forward, investing the creativity, and, most importantly, the political will to move this agenda in the right direction.

A review of the past five years since the indefinite extension of the NPT shows some developments worthy of acknowledgement. Nine states have become party to the NPT, bringing membership to 187. We congratulate all on this important step. We welcome, in particular, the adherence of Chile and Brazil whose actions have contributed to the strengthening of the nuclear weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further expansion of nuclear weapon-free zones was also achieved in recent years with the adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba in Africa and the adoption and entry into force of the Bangkok Treaty for Southeast Asia. We continue to place great store in the role that nuclear weapon free zones play in widening and deepening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.

We welcome also the adoption in 1997 of the model Additional Protocol to the Safeguard Agreements, which has provided the agency with a more effective verification mechanism.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty also represented an important step towards the ultimate cessation of both vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation. Since its conclusion in 1996, 155 states have signed and 54 have ratified, among these, 28 of the 44 whose ratification is essential for the Treaty's entry into force. We join other delegations in welcoming the recent decision by the Russian Federation to ratify the CTBT.

Russia's decision to ratify START II, paving the way for its entry into force, and the agreement of the United States and Russia to begin discussions on START III, are also very welcome.

Mr. President,

Despite these positive developments, we must acknowledge that the progress towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament anticipated by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference has not been realised. The CARICOM states subscribe to the view that the continued arrogation of superior nuclear power by a few has served only to incite others to challenge that superiority, thereby undermining the goals of non-proliferation and disarmament that we seek.

In this the nuclear-weapon states must bear the weight of responsibility. The record shows that these states parties have failed to "pursue in good faith" negotiations on those measures integral to the achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Those of particular concern have often been mentioned during this debate:

- The failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiation on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty;
- The slow pace of ratification of the CTBT, particularly, by those required for its entry into force;
- The failure of the nuclear weapon states to provide security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states;
- The reaffirmation by nuclear weapon states of nuclear power as an integral part of their national defence doctrine and their refusal, with the exception of China, to adopt a policy of no first-use of nuclear weapons; and
- The absence of movement towards the establishment of a time bound framework for nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.

The imbalance in the level of commitment to the NPT's preamble and provisions demonstrated by the nuclear weapon states on one hand and the non-nuclear weapon states on the other is glaring. The stalemate on the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda has served as the dismal backdrop for the nuclear tests undertaken in India and Pakistan in 1998. Universality of the NPT has still not been achieved. The establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones in South Asia and the Middle East remain a distant objective.

These are the issues that demand our most urgent attention at this review conference. In this regard, the CARICOM states underscore their support for the approach to these issues contained in the working paper submitted to this meeting by the Non-Aligned Movement. We also reaffirm the right of all states parties to pursue the development and production of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We join the call for the removal of all obstacles to the transfer of technology for the purpose of promoting the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We look forward to tackling these issues seriously during the work of the Main Committees and the Subsidiary Bodies.

Mr. President,

The CARICOM States have repeatedly expressed their continuing concern regarding the safety and environmental risks to which coastal states are exposed by the practice of shipping nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea.

We consider this meeting an appropriate forum in which to address this matter squarely, in view of the fact that the final report of Main Committee II of the 1995 Conference pointed to:

"the interest of all States in any transportation of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level nuclear waste being conducted in a safe and secure manner..."

Efforts in other forums to address this problem have, in our view, been inadequate. While the IMO Code of Practice has been made binding, it does not provide for the protection of en-route coastal states. These countries, therefore, bear the risk of accidents with no legal recourse to compensation. The IAEA has yet to respond to the request of en-route states for the preparation of a separate convention on the trans-boundary movement of nuclear material that would provide for protection against the risk associated with maritime nuclear transport.

The time for tangential references to this issue is past. Reports indicate that the number of shipments of highly radioactive nuclear waste is expected to increase dramatically over the next several years. Recent reports of incidents of falsified quality control data for some of these shipments further illustrates the danger that such cargo may pose. The high risk to which en-route coastal states are exposed by this practise is simply unacceptable. We, in the Caribbean are keenly conscious of the fragile marine eco-systems provided by the semi-enclosed Caribbean Sea. Our small island and coastal states are heavily dependent on the resources and industries supported by our sea and coastline. A single accident could visit untold disaster on the entire region.

It is for these reasons that the CARICOM Heads of Government have called repeatedly for the cessation of these shipments through the Caribbean Sea. We believe that until a complete moratorium is established on such shipments, the time has come for the international community to address itself to the preparation of a comprehensive legal regime that would both strictly regulate these shipments and provide full protection and compensation for en-route coastal states in the event of accident.

To this end, the CARICOM states propose to introduce for consideration in Committee III, a Working Paper to be discussed under the question of the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as addressed by Article IV. This paper calls for the early establishment of a consultative process, which would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive international regime for the protection of the population and marine environment of en-route coastal states from shipments of nuclear material.

The CARICOM states look forward to the support and cooperation of states parties in the coming weeks as we pursue this very important initiative.