



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



ON

AGENDA ITEMS 105: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
&
106: International Drug Control

IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNGA

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Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to address the Committee on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with regard to Agenda Item 105: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and Agenda Item 106: International Drug Control.

On behalf of the CARICOM Member States, I wish to thank the representatives of the Secretariat for the comprehensive reports on the two agenda items. The Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity, presents a wide-ranging account of developments in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Importantly, it tackles a number of emerging policy issues, responses thereto and recommendations aimed at enhancing the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme.

We welcome its recommendations and join the call for strengthening of the technical cooperation capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), particularly to combat organized crime, corruption, trafficking in persons, terrorism and its financing. Moreover, we support the proposal for Member States to undertake and support assessments of transnational organized crime threats, including emerging threats, at the national and the international levels; and to provide UNODC with the funding necessary to enable it to continue providing and expanding technical assistance for the effective implementation of the relevant Conventions and Protocols on crime prevention, criminal justice and international drug control.

The issue of funding is critical. We use this medium to register our strong concern about the limited regular budget resources, and the continued reduction in general purpose funding for the UNODC, while simultaneously expanding the programme volume of the organization which will continue to impact the ability of UNODC to promote policymaking and provide expertise to Member States in accordance with its mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean continues to face with the twin menace of the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and small arms and light weapons. It is well-known that we are not producers of weapons and ammunition, yet the volume of these items that emerge in the Caribbean is startling. The porous nature of our borders whether by land, air or sea, make us an easy conduit for transshipment between the major sources and destinations of illicit drugs. The attendant crime and violence have elevated these activities on the development agenda because they create instability and force us to divert scarce resources to tackle this scourge. Consequently, they constitute a major threat to national and regional development.

The emerging policy issues including piracy, cybercrime, the sexual exploitation of children, and trafficking in cultural property are of equal concern to CARICOM States. These relatively new and emerging issues present new and increased challenges to our small, vulnerable societies.

In an increasingly globalised international community, these emerging issues remind us that we must increase our efforts to counter organized crime. Yet, the transnational dimension of the problem cannot be overstated. The criminal networks extend across our borders to countries in South America, North America and Europe. That is why active collaboration with and assistance from our regional and international partners are crucial in our efforts to develop and implement effective border control methods, practices and procedures.

Mr Chairman,

The current state of the global economy places an added burden on our countries, which has made the region more vulnerable to the threats posed by organised crime. This is because crime does not exist in a vacuum. It thrives in an environment in which poverty is prevalent and opportunities are limited. The fact that we are located along one of the principal routes for the trafficking of illicit drugs exacerbates this problem.

The region confronts a “black plague” as Belizean Prime Minister Dean Barrow described the drug trade at the Summit of the Americas held in Port of Spain in April last year. Illegal guns have found their way on the streets and in the hands of youths who are attracted to the lucrative gains and earnings which these illegal activities seem to promise. Additionally, the number of children and young people that continue to fall prey to drug abuse continues to be alarming, and this is of grave concern to the region. These developments demonstrate why CARICOM intends to table a resolution on youth, guns, drugs and crime to address the scourge of violence, among other issues, on our societies with the hope of convening a high level meeting to arrive at an international consensus on the way forward. We believe this would be a timely addition to the UN agenda if it is adopted during the current international year of the youth.

Recent statistics have shown that violent crimes including gun crimes such as shootings, armed robberies, as well as gang related murders have generally increased across all states in the region, with significant reports in Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. In 2009 Jamaica alone seized 569 illegal firearms and 6068 rounds of ammunition.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to share with you some of the measures adopted by CARICOM to address critical security issues within the region in an effort to mitigate the effects of crime, criminal activity and the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. In 2007, the Community’s Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) was established as the implementation arm of a Regional Architecture for the development and management of the CARICOM Regional Action Agenda on Crime and Security issues. IMPACS is buttressed by the policy direction of the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE).

CARICOM has also established strategic partnerships with third States and regional and international agencies, primarily through our law enforcement apparatus. One such partnership was established with the Government of Canada, through its Anti-Crime Capacity

Building Program (ACCBP); while the United States has launched a Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

Since 2008, CARICOM Heads of Government agreed on a Strategy and Plan of Action to stem the rising tide of criminality. This Plan of Action defines the priorities in the Community's fight against increasing trends of crime and violence in the Caribbean and embraces a range of issues including:

- Maritime and airspace cooperation;
- Intelligence and information sharing;
- A Plan of Action for treating with Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- Measures to counter the incidence of Drug Trafficking, Murder and Kidnapping;
- Measures to stem Gang and Youth-Related Violence; and
- Measures to mitigate the effects of criminal deportation.

At a recently concluded meeting of the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE), CARICOM acknowledged that crime and security has become the fourth pillar of the Community, alongside trade and economic integration, foreign and community relations and functional cooperation.

Our respective Member States have adopted, and continue to adopt a multi-faceted approach to tackling crime and violence, relying not only on law enforcement but strategic social intervention and social transformation initiatives to create new opportunities and inspire hope among, especially our young people, who are vulnerable to being recruited or conscripted into criminal enterprises.

Domestically, we have begun to increase partnerships among all key stakeholders (the public sector, the private sector, inter-governmental, non-governmental, and other civil society organizations) with the goal of improving levels of cooperation and collaboration across sectors. Some Member States like Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago have partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in implementing Citizen Security Programmes that integrate crime and violence prevention into community and sectoral programmes.

Among the strategic partnerships forged with international institutions, let me highlight the 2008 Social Development and Crime Prevention Action Plan that was prepared in collaboration with the World Bank and the UNODC, to address the development challenges posed by the high levels of crime and violence in the Region. The Action Plan seeks to target various high risk groups within the Caribbean Community. It is expected to be implemented over the period 2009-2013 and has already met with some measure of success. This is one of several positive achievements jointly undertaken with the UNODC which have been overshadowed by the decision to close its regional office formerly located in Barbados.

The continued call to reassess the decision for this closure maintains currency for us, even as we seek to engage with and benefit from various capacity building programmes from other UN

agencies such as the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC).

Mr Chairman,

CARICOM Member States are aware that the challenges we face in addressing the incidence of crime and violence in the Region require us to adopt common coordinated approaches. We are not at all isolated. What affects one State inevitably affects others.

The situation is daunting and we lack institutional and financial capacity, but it is the firm resolve of all CARICOM Member States to tackle head-on these scourges; to mount effective counter offensives against the powerful narcotics trade; to destroy the infestation of our societies, particularly among the young, and the corruption of our institutions; to dismantle the large and powerful, organised criminal networks whose actions translate into corruption, violence, and the degradation of our institutions, amongst other things.

But we cannot do it alone. The transnational nature of organized crime requires cross-border collaboration at the bilateral, regional and international levels to combat the illegal trade and tackle with equal vigour the supply, transit and demand sides of the international drug trade. The recent High-Level meeting on Transnational Organized Crime and the Fourth Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons were instrumental in reinforcing the need for the implementation of measures to curtail the growing threats.

We will continue to press for more effective international measures to stem the flow of organised criminal activity within the Caribbean. The drugs, guns, filter down to itinerant criminals and, coupled with the problem of money-laundering, corruption, trafficking in persons, among other concerns, lend themselves to grave consequences for the peace and safety of our societies.

I thank you.