



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

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



**ON
THIRD COMMITTEE GENERAL DISCUSSION
AGENDA ITEM 67:
'PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN'**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 1, UNHQ
NEW YORK**

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FINAL TEXT

Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on Agenda Item 67: Promotion and protection of the rights of children.

CARICOM attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and looks forward to the exchange of views that will take place during this session.

We also wish to express appreciation for the Secretary-General's reports on this agenda item.

Chair,

The past three years have been exceedingly challenging for the world's children. Many are still grappling with the lingering effects of school shutdowns during the COVID 19 pandemic; many are suffering from violence, often in silence, online and offline; many are facing uncertain futures as refugees and internally displaced persons due to conflict and climate change; and too many are lacking access to basic necessities like food, clean water and sanitation, and adequate shelter.

The children of the Caribbean have not been exempt, and overcoming these challenges has required a concerted effort by governments, civil society organizations, international agencies, and local communities. Indeed, our Governments have stepped up efforts to implement the necessary policies and programmes to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of children – those who are at risk of harm and also those who have come into conflict with the law.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the cornerstone treaty to prioritize children's rights, safety, and well-being. All CARICOM countries are States Parties to the CRC. Thus, our Governments are committed to ensuring that children have the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment by:

- Providing access to quality and inclusive education;
- Providing healthcare services to guarantee physical and mental well-being, with a special emphasis on maternal and child health;
- Eradicating child labour and all forms of exploitation, and promoting child protection systems to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and violence;

- Creating safe and nurturing environments where children can thrive, free from discrimination, racism, and any other forms of injustice;
- Fostering a sense of inclusion and participation, giving children a voice in decisions that affect their lives, and ensuring their opinions are heard and valued;
- Combating child trafficking and exploitation, including child sexual abuse material by working collaboratively to strengthen border controls and legislation; and
- Investing in programs and initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by children in vulnerable situations, including those affected by poverty, disability, or displacement.

Chair,

Traditionally, the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the European Union collaborate on the biennial resolution on the Rights of the Child. This year, the focus of the resolution will be on the digital environment. CARICOM Member States, as conscientious members of GRULAC, are dedicated to the

effort to present a well-balanced draft that adequately addresses the rights and safety of children in the digital environment.

The topic of online safety for children is extremely relevant and timely. After all, there are ongoing discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes and the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies. CARICOM is heavily invested in successful outcomes for both of these processes. In this regard, CARICOM has reflected on the following challenges of children in the digital world:

- Encountering inappropriate content, which can be harmful to a child's development and may desensitize them to inappropriate behaviour;
- Sharing personal information online, which can lead to privacy breaches, identity theft, and cyberbullying; and
- Being exposed to false or misleading information online, which can affect their understanding of the world and their critical thinking skills.

To equip our children to confront these challenges, it is imperative that children are educated about online safety. It is also essential for governments and businesses to implement regulations and tools that protect children online, while respecting their right to explore and learn in the digital age. In addition, the role of the family cannot be overstated. The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children, in the best interests of the child, both online and offline.

Chair,

CARICOM Member States reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of every child within our region. Recognizing that children are our future and the most vulnerable members of our societies, we pledge to work tirelessly to ensure their well-being and to safeguard their rights.

I thank you.