



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

STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the thematic debate on Nuclear Weapons Disarmament.

Nuclear weapons proliferation remains one of the gravest challenges to international peace and security. CARICOM Member States regret the fact that the quest to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has not been able to move from aspiration to accomplishment. Even as we say this, however, CARICOM reiterates its call for Member States to acknowledge and respect each other's legitimate security interests—human, national and collective— to attain international peace, security and development for all.

While countries continue their nuclear proliferation, disregarding the right to life, peace, security and development of non-nuclear weapon States, like those in Latin America and the Caribbean, we continue to lead by example in our pursuit of general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation. Only last week, Nauru, Jamaica and Honduras became the 48th, 49th and 50th countries to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) thereby making it possible for the Treaty's entry into force on the 22nd January 2021, a historic milestone for this landmark Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM recognizes that the entry into force of the TPNW, though important, does not signify the end of our journey towards total disarmament. There is much work still to be done, as States Parties will now be required to implement their positive obligations and abide by its prohibitions. It has not gone unnoticed that none of the nuclear weapons states have signed the treaty. However, we remain ardent supporters of the treaty and will continue to call upon nuclear armed states to engage in nuclear disarmament in good faith. In addition, as noted by ICAN upon the Treaty's entry into force, "we can now call nuclear weapons what they are: prohibited weapons of mass destruction, just like chemical weapons and biological weapons."

CARICOM recalls the impassioned plea of Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, as she shared the horrors of that morning 75 years ago and the impact it continues to have on her and other survivors, to this very day. Her words aptly summed up the heart-wrenching emotions and deep sentiments of the peoples of all countries when she said, "*In our struggle for survival, rebuilding lives out of the ashes, we survivors, or 'hibakusha', became convinced that no human being should ever have to repeat our experience of the inhumane, immoral, and cruel atomic bombing, and that our mission is to warn the world about the reality*

of nuclear dangers and to help people understand the ultimate evil of nuclear weapons. We have a moral imperative to abolish nuclear arsenals, before they are used again, by accident or by design.”

The experience of persons who have been victims of nuclear weapons reflect the indescribable human toll that these weapons pose to the survivors and their families. Their unparalleled destructive power represents a unique and existential threat to humanity, one which we are determined to neutralize.

We therefore call on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to consider doing so. We join with the growing international consensus on this critical issue. Indeed, it is in the interest of all world citizens to eliminate nuclear weapons and to do so in a verifiable way, under international control.

Mr. Chairman,

As non-nuclear weapon States, CARICOM’s commitment to securing nuclear disarmament is embedded in the way of life of the people of our region. We are proud to be parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco that gave rise to the first Nuclear Free Zone in a densely populated area. Since its entry into force in 1969 our countries have remained committed to the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. In essence, prohibition is ingrained in our DNA. As small island developing states (SIDS) we hold strongly to the view that there are more rational ways to address security concerns than a reliance on nuclear deterrence doctrines that are stubbornly rooted in the constant threat of mutual annihilation.

CARICOM States will continue to call nuclear weapon states to account for their failure to implement their obligations as part of the grand bargain, that is, the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. This remains a central objective, given the lack of progress in disarmament and the humanitarian consequences that would result from even a limited use of nuclear weapons. After all, like any small island developing state we view the prospect of any nuclear detonation whether by design, accident or negligence as an existential threat that could decimate the entire Caribbean region.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to the aim of total disarmament in line with the pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We regret that the COVID19 pandemic has delayed the convening of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty, which was our opportunity to assess the treaty’s implementation and State Parties compliance, as well as celebrate the

fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. However, we are encouraged that tentative dates in January 2021 have been set for the 10th Review Conference to be convened. We look forward to Member States engaging in fruitful discussions on the Treaty's achievements. The Review Conference will also enable us to making concrete decisions to further advance the objectives and implementation of what is the cornerstone of our collective efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and collaborate on advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

CARICOM reiterates its call for all remaining States which have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to commit to signing and ratifying it without delay.

In addition, we are gravely concerned that the only non-proliferation bilateral agreement between the two most heavily armed nuclear weapon states to reduce their strategic nuclear weapons, remains in limbo. With only a little over four months remaining before the New START treaty expires on February 5, 2021, we encourage urgent communication between both parties to arrive at an amicable resolution to the challenges, with a view to extending the New START Treaty. The maintenance of the status quo exposes all of us to a dangerous situation that poses a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM welcomes the important step taken towards the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, in accordance with the 1995 Resolution on making the Middle East a nuclear free zone. The adoption of a political declaration by Member States during the First Session of the Conference on the establishment of this Nuclear Free Zone is a demonstration to the international community of our political will and determination to achieve that objective.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is encouraged that although the COVID19 pandemic has affected the work on disarmament, the Office of Disarmament Affairs has remained active and committed to its objectives. Unfortunately, the pandemic is happening at a time when reports indicate that there has been an increase in global military spending and countries are building faster and more accurate nuclear arms, more than at any other point in history.

This development is of serious concern for CARICOM as the strengthening of national nuclear weapons systems diverts resources from the world's biggest threats such as climate change, inequality and public health.

CARICOM therefore concurs with the Secretary-General that “reversing the further deterioration of the international security environment requires a return to the mindset where the pursuit of nuclear disarmament is understood as the best means for preserving peace and maintain stability in times of turbulence”.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM remains committed to the disarmament agenda and all efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. We conclude with the words of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, that “A deteriorating international security environment and rising nuclear risks continue to demonstrate the wisdom of the adage that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.”

I thank you.