



**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**

**FIRST COMMITTEE GENERAL DEBATE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**FINAL TEXT**

**Mr. Chair,**

I have the honour to address this Committee on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on All Disarmament and International Security Agenda Items.

At the outset, CARICOM congratulates you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and for the work that you and the Bureau have begun in order to allow us to pursue the Committee's vital work to advance international peace and security. CARICOM pledges its full support as you preside over this Session. We also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Mohan Pieris of Sri Lanka, for his stewardship as Chair of this Committee during the 77<sup>th</sup> Session.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

**Mr. Chair,**

This Committee meets against the backdrop of an international peace and security architecture which is confronted with new and more complex security challenges. The present geo-strategic environment is an exceedingly dangerous one. The scale and reach of international terrorism, the increasing influence of non-state actors, the alarming rise in armed violence, new proliferation threats and the continued escalation of conflict between States, are undoubtedly unprecedented. CARICOM submits that given the urgency of confronting these global challenges our responses must be intensified amid the increasing signs of uncertainty, instability and fragility. CARICOM therefore calls on all States to act consistently within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations on all matters related to disarmament and international security.

In this regard, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop a New Agenda for Peace in close consultation with Member States and in collaboration with all relevant partners, as part of the preparations for the 2024 Summit of the Future. We further support the call of the Secretary-General to agree on more collective security responses and a meaningful set of steps to manage emerging risks as set out in his report, 'Our Common Agenda.'

**Mr. Chair,**

Confronting the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons should be a concern for the entire international community. The recognition that arms sales can result in the spilling of 'innocent blood' for profit is a far cry from the headlines so often used to justify multi-billion-dollar arms deals; that they promote 'stability' and are only for 'defense purposes.'

CARICOM Member States have been at the forefront in witnessing painfully, the destructive effects of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and its associated ammunition, despite the fact that we are neither manufacturers, exporters nor large importers of conventional weapons. Faced with the gruesome consequences, CARICOM Member States are forced to divert scarce resources from our national development budgets in a bid to stifle the far-reaching effects of this scourge.

**Mr. Chair,**

Given CARICOM's deep concern about the unprecedented levels of crime in our territories, CARICOM Heads of Government convened in, Trinidad and Tobago in April of this year, a Regional Symposium addressing Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue. CARICOM Member States have embraced the view that violence is a public health crisis that requires comprehensive interventions to battle an epidemic that has claimed far too many lives, for far too long. The Regional Symposium, which resulted in the adoption of a Declaration by the Heads of Government, emphasized the importance of an integrated and robust response that strengthens education and criminal justice systems; improves equitable access to services and engages youth themselves, among others, in addressing the issue of crime and violence.

**Mr. Chair,**

CARICOM has found non-binding agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. In this regard, we welcomed the adoption of the final report of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Conventional Ammunition in June of this year. For the first time, the United Nations addressed the issue of ammunition in a dedicated forum. We

reiterate our view that addressing the issue of conventional ammunition at the international level in a comprehensive and independent manner, is both timely and necessary. With the adoption of a new global framework on conventional ammunition, an important gap in arms control, which has existed for far too long, has finally been addressed.

**Mr. Chair,**

CARICOM expects that the comprehensive framework on conventional ammunition would complement already existing agreements on international and regional levels, in particular the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects (UN-POA). We therefore reiterate the importance we place on the UN-POA as an important instrument in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We look forward to the convening of Fourth UN Conference to Review the Progress made in the implementation of the UN-POA in 2024.

**Mr. Chair,**

It has been ten years since the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) opened for signature. Member States of CARICOM have been active in the ATT process since its inception. We continue to regard the ATT as a vital instrument in the global community's efforts towards a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We firmly believe that a strong and universal ATT can effectively regulate the trade in conventional arms and ammunition and eliminate the diversion of weapons and illegal arms transfers that significantly contribute to the suffering of many of our citizens, especially women and children, who live daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms.

CARICOM Member States therefore commend the work undertaken under the Presidency of the Republic of Korea in advancing the interests of the Treaty during the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties and welcome the convening of the 10<sup>th</sup> CSP under the Presidency of Romania.

**Mr. Chair,**

The elimination of nuclear weapons would be the greatest gift we could bestow on future generations. CARICOM strongly reiterates that the only way to completely eliminate nuclear risks is to eliminate nuclear weapons from this planet.

Yet, the current state of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime paints a worrying picture. CARICOM has previously voiced its deep disappointment that the Tenth NPT Review Conference was unable to produce a consensus outcome document, essentially failing to make significant progress on its commitment to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Additionally, as fully committed States Parties to the NPT, CARICOM laments the inability of the recently concluded first Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference, to adopt a factual summary, agreed to by all States Parties of the NPT.

**Mr. Chair,**

The unfortunate paralysis of the NPT demonstrates the importance and relevance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), for which the Member States of CARICOM played a leading role. The failure of meetings of the NPT to make substantial progress reveals that the TPNW has a critical role to play in addressing the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the TPNW constitutes a fundamental step towards the irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons needed for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of these weapons, for the realization of the NPT objectives and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As the TPNW looks ahead to the Second Conference of States Parties in November of this year, CARICOM urges all States that have not done so to join the Treaty without delay.

**Mr. Chair,**

This year marks 19 years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540. CARICOM's long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment

to address threats posed by weapons of mass destruction has been further underscored by our ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons (CCW) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons (BWC). We renew our commitment to implement our legally binding obligations emanating from resolution 1540.

**Mr. Chair,**

Advances in technology will continue to drive changes on how future conflicts will be waged. It is becoming increasingly evident that the introduction of new technological applications, such as those related to autonomy in weapon systems and lack of human control in the decision-making processes of these weapons, raise serious concerns from humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives. CARICOM Member States remain concerned that such weapon technologies may have detrimental implications for maintaining peace and security and protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure; raising questions about the sufficiency of existing governance frameworks and the proliferation of these weapons to non- state actors, including criminal groups, gangs and terrorists.

In this connection, a CARICOM Conference on the Human Impacts of Autonomous Weapons Systems was convened in Trinidad and Tobago one month ago (September 5-6, 2023), at which States adopted the CARICOM Declaration on Autonomous Weapons Systems. CARICOM Member States are proud to announce that we join other States in the effort to negotiate an international legally binding instrument that prohibits unpredictable or uncontrollable autonomous weapons systems.

Member States of CARICOM acknowledge the important work undertaken within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), while recognizing the need to broaden the discussion to accommodate an inclusive conversation required for the advancement of an international legally binding instrument, incorporating prohibitions and regulations on autonomous weapons systems.

**Mr. Chair,**

CARICOM is appreciative of the continued support received from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC). This organization has assisted CARICOM Member States in capacity building measures and technical assistance programmes. We look forward to our continued collaboration with UNLIREC.

CARICOM further wishes to highlight the important role of civil society in the field of disarmament and international security. We value our partnership with members of civil society and commit to continuing our cooperation with them in order to advance the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Mr. Chair,**

In conclusion, CARICOM Member States recognize that the work of this Committee is challenging and that consensus is often difficult to achieve. However, we do have before us, yet another opportunity to re-direct dialogue and fire up negotiations during the current Session, and make meaningful progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Throughout our discussions and negotiations, let us remember that none of us will be truly safe until we are all safe.

I thank you.