



**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)**



**AGENDA ITEMS 77 (a) : OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA &
77 (b): SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES**

**SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

5th DECEMBER 2017

General

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to intervene, on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the annual General Assembly debate on agenda item 77 (a) “*Oceans and the Law of the Sea*” and 77 (b) on “*Sustainable Fisheries*.” I align this statement with that delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador who spoke on behalf of the G77 and China. For CARICOM, both agenda issues are of central importance, given our status as small island developing states (SIDS) that are affected by the attendant vulnerabilities associated with this categorization. I wish, therefore, to extend our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, as well as to the various parts of the UN system, for the reports that have been prepared to guide our deliberations in this regard.

Mr. President,

Our discussions take place after a momentous year for the Ocean. We have witnessed the successful convening of the inaugural 2017 Ocean Conference, the launch of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment I) and the First meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which followed the successful entry into force of the Paris Agreement last October. These milestone achievements have engendered increased awareness about the action that needs to be undertaken to protect and sustainably use our marine resources. Furthermore, they provide confirmation of what can be realized through cooperation and collaboration.

UNCLOS as the Cornerstone - BBNJ

Mr. President,

CARICOM remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). As the fundamental multilateral compact regulating all activities undertaken in respect of the oceans and seas, the Convention remains a central framework for addressing the interrelated nature of the general problems of ocean space. It furthermore facilitates the equitable utilization and conservation of marine resources, and the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

It is for this reason that CARICOM has been active in the deliberations aimed at creating, under the UNCLOS, a legally binding instrument to address the conservation and sustainable use

of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We are pleased that the Preparatory Commission completed its work within the established timeline and look forward to the start of intergovernmental negotiations in September 2018.

We wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Carlos Duarte of Brazil, who steered the process towards its successful conclusion, as well as to the distinguished representatives of New Zealand and Mexico, who skillfully presided over the consultations that culminated in the finalization of the modalities resolution for the forthcoming IGC. CARICOM is committed to working towards the continued success of this process and to ensuring that the views of all Member States are duly taken into account. We encourage other member states to do likewise.

Regular Process

Mr. President,

CARICOM remains a supporter of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including socioeconomic aspects. As islands dependent on the ocean for our livelihood and socio-economic development, we value the work undertaken in the context of this Group. We look forward to our active engagement in its deliberations throughout the second cycle of the World Ocean Assessment Report and will continue to lend our support in this regard.

Institutional Support

Mr. President,

We also wish to express our appreciation for the invaluable work done by the institutions created by UNCLOS, in particular the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Both the Commission and the Tribunal have made significant contributions since their establishment some 20 years ago. They continue to provide practical guidance in the implementation of the Convention. CARICOM is pleased to have contributed to the work of both entities by fielding successful candidates from Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and Belize to serve on the Tribunal, as well as from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to serve on the Commission.

As the host of the International Seabed Authority, our region remains committed to supporting the work of the Authority. We, therefore, welcome the fact that at its 23rd session in August 2017, the Assembly approved the final report of the Review Committee established to

carry out the first periodic review of the international regime of the Area, pursuant to Article 154 of the Convention. We look forward to future work to be undertaken in this regard.

CARICOM is indebted to the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for the support it provides in its role as the Secretariat for the Convention. We use this occasion to encourage the provision of resources to the Division commensurate with the demand from Member States.

We are also grateful for the training and capacity building provided, in particular, by the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland, through which approximately 45 persons from the region benefitted last year.

CARICOM also sees merit in ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening international cooperation and coordination among all relevant agencies to identify areas of potential synergies and increased visibility for ocean-related issues. We concur with the Secretary-General that within the UN System, inter-agency cooperation, such as through UN-Oceans, remains a crucial tool in this regard. This augurs well for addressing emerging and pressing issues and we welcome the prospects to further build on the progress made to date, particularly in support of the attainment of the SDGs.

National, Regional and International Collaboration

Mr. President,

Like many other small island developing countries, CARICOM is highly vulnerable to the effects of marine pollution, ocean acidification, and their consequential impacts on our fish stocks and marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs, as well as the effect of climate change on sea level rise. These factors affect our fishing communities, tourism and, by extension, our people and economies at all levels.

As evidenced by the recent passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, our sub-region remains highly susceptible to extreme weather events that threaten our very existence. However, in the face of these ravages our resolve to better respond to these natural hazards has been heightened. To this end, CARICOM Member States have taken a number of steps in several key areas to realise several major targets. *Belize*, for example, is one of a dozen countries to have met the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to conserve 17 percent of its terrestrial and 10 percent of its marine areas. *Antigua and Barbuda* is the first CARICOM country to ban single use plastic bags and is in the process of expanding the ban to include polystyrene or styrofoam containers. *St. Vincent and the Grenadines* has also imposed a

ban on the importation of plastics and styrofoam containers and will outlaw their use as of January 2018. *St. Lucia and Grenada* are in the process of developing legislation along similar lines.

In the area of conservation, *St. Vincent and the Grenadines* has committed, as part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, to effectively conserve and sustainably manage at least 20 percent of its marine and coastal environment by 2020. This goes beyond the 10 percent stipulated in SDG 14.5. By 2020, it is *Jamaica's* goal to further strengthen the regime governing its protected areas, including marine protected areas, through the promulgation of a Cays Management Policy, a new protected areas policy, and the passage of overarching protected areas legislation. For its part, *Guyana* is in the process of developing a suite of interrelated services to better manage its coastal ecosystem, including data gathering, social mobilization and capacity development under its recently launched Green State Development Strategy.

To address the threat of invasive organisms to marine and coastal ecosystems and to minimize the shipping industry's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, *Jamaica* has partnered with the IMO, UNDP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the private sector, as a Lead Partner Country under the Global Ballast Water Management Project (GloBallast). It is also a Lead Pilot Country under the Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnerships Project (GloMEEP). As a Lead Partner Country, *Jamaica* will “twin” with other countries in the region to provide legal and policy related assistance to enable those States to accede to the Ballast Water Management Convention.

Mr. President,

CARICOM shares the Secretary-General's observations that the limited knowledge of some marine ecosystems and processes and the insufficient integration of available scientific knowledge into decision-making processes remain a challenge for the sustainable management of the ocean. Consequently, there is need to generate pertinent data and information to transfer technical skills, as well as to design and implement sustainable development strategies at the national level. CARICOM stands ready to play its part and to partner with others in this regard.

To this end, we are appreciative of the training programme jointly facilitated in May of this year by the Korea Maritime Institute and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and the Sub-commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Region (IOCARIBE). The workshop, which was held in St. Lucia, was focused on marine scientific research and was designed exclusively for Caribbean Member States.

Given the scope for deepening scientific awareness, CARICOM fully supports the designation of the United Nations International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

Sustainable Fisheries

Mr. President,

With respect to sustainable fisheries, CARICOM continues to implement its Common Fisheries Policy aimed at conserving, managing and sustainably utilising the region's fisheries resources. There continues to be regular engagement through regional workshops, public education campaigns and multi-stakeholder consultations coordinated by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, in partnership with organisations within and outside the region.

CARICOM is at the forefront of regional efforts to develop and implement fisheries management plans, establish and strengthen partnerships among key stakeholders within the ocean sector, and to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfishing, which pose a threat to the sustainability of local and regional fisheries.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

I conclude by reiterating CARICOM's unwavering commitment to play its part to support the continued efforts to address issues related to the Ocean with the urgency that they deserve. This remains our only viable option if we are to ensure that future generations are beneficiaries of the resources of the Ocean, in keeping with principle of the common heritage of mankind.

Thank you.