

PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY E. COURTENAY RATTRAY**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA**

**TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE**

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING TO COMMEMORATE**

 **AND PROMOTE THE International Day for the**

**TOTAL Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

**TUESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

Mr. President,

Jamaica welcomes the opportunity to participate in this year’s High-level Meeting. Given the current nuclear threat environment we do so with a sense of urgency and even greater conviction that nuclear weapons should have no place in our global security framework.

The threat or use of nuclear weapons stands in stark contradiction to the moral imperative to prevent crimes against humanity. It runs counter to the common ideals and goals that we have embraced as an international community, and is inimical to our efforts to advance the objective of general and complete disarmament.

This objective cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of rising tensions and growing uncertainty. It cannot be realised in an international security environment that is premised on the reliance of nuclear weapons as a security deterrent. Consequently, we must ensure that the role of nuclear weapons is diminished and ultimately eliminated from military and security doctrines.

As a global family, we must abide by our legal obligations and commitments to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, this will not be possible without a sustained vision of a world that is ultimately rid of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

As reinforced in recent months, the development and testing of nuclear weapons serve only to compound regional crises and create even greater levels of mistrust and instability. They reduce opportunities for meaningful cooperation and increase the prospects for humanitarian catastrophes, whether through intentional acts, inadvertently, or through sheer misunderstanding. In this regard, Jamaica condemns the recent nuclear and ballistic tests carried out by the DPRK.

Mr. President,

Our meeting takes on greater significance against the backdrop of the historic adoption of the first legally binding treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. With this treaty, we can further pave the way towards definitive action to better enhance prospects for a nuclear weapon free world.

Jamaica regards the Treaty as an important addition to the existing disarmament instruments that are intended to strengthen and bolster our disarmament efforts.  We, therefore, look forward to working with other Member States to operationalise the elements of the Treaty.

We commit to working with all relevant actors in support of the ultimate objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We look forward to the convening no later than 2018, of a UN high level international conference on nuclear disarmament. We are also focused on other relevant fora, such as the Conference on Disarmament and the Conferences of States Parties to the NPT and the CTBT, where we hope that progress can be made to supplement existing legal instruments.

Mr. President,

Our concern about the continued reliance on nuclear weapons is not unfounded. We have witnessed the rise of non-state actors, with the means, resolve and determination to secure weapons of mass destruction that can cause wanton damage and loss of life. This sobering reality should compel us to not only work together but commit to ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and that new types of nuclear weapons systems are not developed.

Also critical will be increasing awareness about the devastating impact of nuclear weapons amongst the wider populace. This holistic and comprehensive approach to promoting the involvement of ordinary citizens in the attainment of the goal of complete and general disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, should be encouraged.

In closing, Mr. President, let me reiterate Jamaica's unswerving commitment to playing its part in this endeavour. You can be assured that it is a commitment that we will continue to take seriously.