



STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR PENNELOPE BECKLES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE
FIRST COMMITTEE**

**ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS
[ITEMS 52 (B) AND 90 TO 106]**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
OCTOBER 2, 2017.**

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

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

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM extends its congratulations to you on your election as Chair of this Committee and we offer our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau. We assure you of CARICOM's full support as you embark on your Chairmanship.

It would be remiss to neglect expressing our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum of Algeria, for his stewardship during his tenure as Chair of the First Committee during the 71st Session.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Chairman,

If we listened to the tenor of the statements echoed through the Hall of this august organization by our Heads of State and Government just days ago, we would be forced to consider the ominous state of affairs that currently characterizes the world in which we live, including in the field of disarmament and international security. Indeed it was the Secretary-General himself who stated that, 'We are a world in pieces'¹

CARICOM is gravely concerned about the evolving situation in the Korean peninsula and the threat of nuclear war. We are confronted daily by news articles that include: 'War is now a real possibility'² and 'Are we on the brink of nuclear war',³ to name only two. For Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean, this rhetoric is increasingly worrying.

¹ Opening statement at the General Debate of the 72nd UNGA.

² Independent – September 29, 2017.

³ Washington Post – August 11, 2017.

In addition, the scale and reach of international terrorism, the increasing influence of non-state actors, new proliferation threats and the escalation of strife and conflict between States, is unprecedented.

As was said many times by CARICOM in this Committee, this is a concern for us, for we are Small Island Developing States which rely on the rule of law at the national and international levels in order to guarantee our right to a secure, sovereign and peaceful existence. CARICOM therefore strongly encourages all States to act consistently within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations on all matters related to disarmament and international security.

We also reiterate the importance our region attaches to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the contribution this Committee can make, not only to the realization of SDG target 16.4 but also to the attainment of SDG 5.2 to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Mr. Chairman,

The soaring rates of gun-related violence and the prevalence of gun-related fatalities due to the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition, illicit drugs, money laundering, cyber-crime and other dimensions of trans-boundary criminal activities continue to pose the most immediate and significant threats to the security of our region.

However, we are doing our part. The implementing agency on strategies related to crime and security, CARICOM IMPACS, continues to tackle the multi-dimensional nature of crime and security. In keeping with the 2013 CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy, CARICOM IMPACS has embarked on a number of initiatives and partnerships to track the proceeds of crime. CARICOM IMPACS has also been working on assets recovery in the area of asset tracing, asset management and prosecuting assets forfeiture cases, with capacity building at the level of the judiciary, prosecutors and detectives.

Mr. Chairman,

Although we have crafted regional solutions to tackle the myriad of problems of crime and security, fueled in large part by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we are all cognizant of the need for cooperation at the multilateral level and this is why CARICOM States subscribe fully to the object and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty.

We remain firm in our conviction that the ATT can contribute significantly to reducing the suffering of many of our citizens and countless people around the world, especially women and children, who live daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms.

CARICOM reiterates that for the ATT to be a success, it must be implemented in good faith by all States Parties including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons. We call on States to remember the Treaty's core purpose, which is to reduce human suffering.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM has found non-binding legal agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. We therefore reiterate the importance we place on 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), as an important instrument in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

CARICOM looks ahead to the 2018 UNPOA Review Conference, to further strengthen the UN-POA process. We look forward to informal meetings in the lead up to the Rev-Con and will be highlighting the following areas of concern:

- The illicit trade in ammunition;
- Measures to address pervasive small arms and light weapons violence;
- The links between small arms and light weapons reduction and Sustainable Development Goal 16.4
- The role of women in curbing small arms and light weapons proliferation and violence;
- Synergies between the POA and the ATT.

At this juncture Mr. President,

CARICOM wishes to underscore its appreciation for the continued support it receives from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. This organization has supported and assisted Member States of CARICOM in capacity building measures and technical assistance programme and we look forward to continued collaboration with UN-LIREC.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is another area which is a source of grave concern for CARICOM. We have heard the Secretary-General declare at the opening of the General Debate of the 72nd General Assembly, that global anxieties about nuclear weapons were at the highest since the Cold War. He described 'nuclear peril' as first among the threats facing the world today.

CARICOM implores the international community to let those words guide our deliberations in this Committee, for we carry on our shoulders, the responsibility to address one of humanity's greatest challenges – achieving the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is proud to be part of the first densely populated region in the world to declare itself a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlateloco, which established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

Our commitment to a nuclear weapon free world is in keeping with the Special Declarations on the Commitment to advance Multilateral Negotiations on Nuclear Disarmament which was adopted by Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Furthermore, based on the firm conviction that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, a crime against humanity, and also constitute a violation of International Law, including Humanitarian Law, CARICOM Member States joined the international community in the negotiation of a universal legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

July 7, 2017 is a day that will never be forgotten – the day the majority of Member States adopted the Treaty on the prohibition nuclear weapons. CARICOM acknowledges and commends the work of the President of the Conference, Ambassador Elayne Whyte of Costa Rica, for her arduous efforts in guiding the work of the Conference.

We are pleased that since its recent opening for signature on September 20, there are already 53 signatories and 3 States Parties to the Treaty. CARICOM Member State, Guyana, has

already ratified the Treaty and more CARICOM States are expected to do the same. We look forward to the Treaty's early entry into force and for its universal adherence.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM's long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction has been underscored by our ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons.

Without question, regional progress in preventing the proliferation of WMDs is inextricably linked to our economic viability.

CARICOM benefitted from the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency in strengthening our capacity through the sharing of best practices and transfer of technology; from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in providing specialized training in emergency response to deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents.

We also commend the efforts of the CARICOM Regional Coordinator for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540, in his continued efforts to sensitize CARICOM on responses to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Explosive emergencies.

To this end, we welcome further discussion on the threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction, including the recent High Level Side Event on Preventing Terrorism and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, organized by the Government of Panama and the Organization of American States.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

It is symbolic that the Committee begins its deliberations on this, the International Day of Non-Violence. Let us therefore be resolute in our commitment to create a peaceful and secure international environment for current and future generations.

I thank you.