PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

by
His Excellency Dennis Francis
Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations

DURING the DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
76th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On the Thematic discussions on combined clusters 5, 6 and 7.

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Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We align our statement with the one delivered by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

CARICOM remains committed to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by implementing our international obligations and through action at the national and regional levels. With security as the fourth pillar of our regional integration process, CARICOM seeks to implement practical and innovative approaches and collaborate with other member states and institutions to combat our region's multidimensional and complex security threats.

COVID-19 has heightened awareness of the absolute necessity for more collaborative partnerships. There is not a single Member State capable of managing the ever-growing threats to peace and security on its own; thus, international partnerships are an essential means of developing capacity and strengthening frameworks to confront this scourge. We reiterate the need for continued partnerships with member States, the UN system, UN Agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. To this end, CARICOM welcomes the decision to establish an INTERPOL liaison office within the region; which will provide a platform for strengthening the region’s operational capability while providing unique and tailored
support to CARICOM and the wider Caribbean, with hands-on access, to more effectively tackle crime.

Mr. Chair,

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has emphasized the need to advance measures to eliminate crime and violence, in particular, against women and girls. Lockdowns and stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to disturbing increase in armed domestic violence. In the context of a regional-response, UNLIREC has conducted reviews of small arms laws with domestic violence provisions in 22 Latin American and Caribbean States and concluded with recommendations to restrict the ability of convicted perpetrators of domestic violence to acquire or renew firearms licenses. Furthermore, as part of its women and disarmament project, UNLIREC will use these conclusions as a basis for developing online courses on the prevention of domestic armed violence.

We continue to highlight the significant role played by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) in ensuring continuity and effectiveness in the region's actions and responses to challenges posed to security in the region, as well as the implementation of the Region's Management Framework for Crime and Security.
In that regard, the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) developed by CARICOM IMPACS continues to provide officials with pre-arrival and departure manifest data on all passengers and crew members of an aircraft or vessel at each port of entry. A similar system known as the CARICOM's Advance Cargo Information System, developed in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has been established to allow CARICOM Member States to conduct cargo profiling.

Mr. Chair,

As it relates to information and communications technology, CARICOM continues to implement new measures to address current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on security and disarmament measures. Within that context, in the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community, Cybercrime is listed as an obstacle and a threat to social and sustained economic development in the region.

CARICOM in cognizant that as developments in science and technology continue to transform our daily interactions, we must remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging weapon technologies. We also encourage Member States to implement the norms, rules, and principles for responsible behavior, contributing to increased stability and security in cyberspace.
In this regard, CARICOM welcomes the adoption of the consensus final report of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the consensus final report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in the Context of International Security. This success is a clear signal that Member States are working collaboratively and in our collective best interest on matters related to information technology and its impact on security and disarmament measures. CARICOM also looks ahead to the Open-ended Working Group 2021-2025 scheduled to begin later this year, and we pledge our continued support.

Mr. Chair,

While the CARICOM region is not, per se, directly affected by armed conflict, we face tremendous challenges related to armed violence in our countries. As a result, significant resources are diverted away from development in order to address threats to security. Inevitably, repurposing of already limited resources often has a negative impact on social, educational, and infrastructure programs and creates an untenable burden for countries already suffering from debt overload and highly vulnerable to natural disasters.
Mr. Chair,

CARICOM attaches importance to the United Nations Disarmament Machinery and the work of related mechanisms falling under its purview, including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, and the First Committee. The growing sense of instability and unease in international security and cooperation manifested within the Disarmament Machinery reinforces the need for innovative approaches, enhanced dialogue, transparency and a redoubling of commitment, by all members of the international community, towards disarmament.

We are disappointed by the further postponement of the formal substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. However, we take note of and are encouraged by the success of other significant meetings within the ambit of Disarmament Machinery. This is a source of hope for more meaningful engagement that could result in robust movement within the current cycle. Our sincere hope is that within the UN Disarmament Commission, delegations will work steadfastly, transparently and inclusively, to overcome the paralysis inhibiting the conclusion of agreements.

In conclusion, CARICOM values the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament and appreciates its work in promoting a greater understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the other institutions working in international security, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.
Our region has benefited from this Programme and has several alumni, with our own
most recent 2019 Fellow being from Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.