STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

FIRST COMMITTEE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 13TH OCTOBER 2014

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Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of CARICOM.

We wish to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Angela Kane for her introductory statement, and express our appreciation to her team in the Office of Disarmament Affairs for their work during the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

Our deliberation at this 69th session takes place against a global security landscape that is increasingly complex and challenging, which demands greater urgency in our efforts to find solutions to the unfinished business of the disarmament agenda, while addressing a paralyzing array of new and complex emerging challenges. From Jamaica's perspective, these developments, coupled with the ongoing work of the international community to elaborate a Post-2015 Development Agenda, of which peace and security is a prerequisite, gives particular importance to this session of the First Committee.

Nearly seventy years ago, the United Nations Charter established the framework for a system of collective security based on the prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the formation of multilateral institutions for enforcing these principles. The progressive reduction of armaments and the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament are of utmost significance in realizing these objectives.

We believe it is important that these general principles be reaffirmed as the foundation for our efforts. No matter what may be the challenge and the perceived realities of the moment, the promotion of multilateral disarmament must play a central role. The question we continue to confront, in the face of the urgent tasks before us and the obstacles to progress, is how to move multilateral disarmament forward after nearly two decades of little action? Can we build on the successes we have had in the past and more recently with the ATT? Is it time for a major paradigm shift to expand the prism through which we view our agenda to include the humanitarian perspective? How do we overcome the structural inadequacies for dealing with significant and intractable problems? How and to what extent do we give greater consideration to the participation of women and civil society groups?
What is clear is that we need to nurture an atmosphere of mutual confidence, non-discrimination, increased transparency and trust and to exercise the political will and commitment to achieve the stated goals and objectives of this Committee and the wider disarmament machinery.

We recently witnessed the exercise of concerted political will and action with the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty. A little over a year ago, the international community took a significant and resolute stand for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, to reduce human suffering and in defence of global peace, security and stability. As a country that has been disproportionately affected by the irresponsible trade in conventional weapons and a strong advocate for the Treaty, Jamaica welcomes the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification two weeks ago, which provides the basis for its early entry into force on 24th December. We take pride in our active contribution to this process and in being among the first to sign and ratify the Treaty. This we were able to accomplish thanks, in part, to the support of our partners both within and outside of CARICOM and we commend the Government of New Zealand for developing model legislation, which assisted us to achieve our goal of early ratification.

With the entry into force of the Treaty fast approaching, we need to turn our attention to its full and effective implementation. We, therefore, welcome Mexico's timely offer to host the First Conference of States Parties in 2015 at which will commence the important work of operationalising the Treaty. In this vein, we reiterate the emphasis CARICOM countries place on the provisions on international cooperation and assistance as key components of the Treaty, to assist States with technical capacity and legislative challenges. Critical to its implementation is a dedicated and properly resourced Secretariat. In this regard, we fully support CARICOM's endorsed candidate, Trinidad and Tobago, as the site of the ATT Secretariat.

As we continue to grapple with the sobering reality that small arms and light weapons kill an estimated 300,000 people worldwide each year, Jamaica view the inclusion of these weapons in the scope of the ATT as an important complement to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which remains integral to our efforts to address this scourge.

We are pleased to be part of the fruitful discussion and successful outcome of the Fifth Biennial of Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the POA and the International Tracing Instrument held in June of this year. We remain committed to its full implementation. Critical to future efforts will be establishment
of a legally binding instrument on marking and tracing for small arms and light weapons, and the incorporation of ammunition in the Programme of Action. So too will be our engagement in substantive discussions on issues such as brokering and border controls and consideration of the complementarities between the PoA and the ATT.

Special mention should also be made of the work undertaken by the Regional Centre for Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has been active in its support of national and regional efforts to implement the Programme of Action. It is hoped that the necessary resources will be found to continue this critical work of practical disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The positive action in the area of conventional weapons is juxtaposed against the lack of progress in the area of nuclear disarmament: the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force; the threat of a nuclear detonation whether deliberate or by accident remains a part of our daily existence; there are still unresolved concerns over the nuclear activities of some NPT states parties; a number of states remain outside the NPT regime; and the Conference on Disarmament remains in a state of dysfunction. Next year, we have an opportunity at the 2015 NPT Review Conference to make good on our commitments: to examine new and creative means to strengthen the implementation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime; but we are not yet sure whether we will achieve success. The clock is ticking. With less than six months to go before the Conference, we are confronted with the seriousness of the challenges we face in addressing the lack of implementation.

It is our fervent hope that serious efforts will be made by States Parties to the NPT towards ensuring the success of the Conference, as we continue to advocate for full compliance of nuclear weapons States with their commitments under the treaty. We, therefore, urge the nuclear weapons States to fully comply with their Article VI obligations and respond to the desire of the overwhelming majority of States for prompt and effective measures to pursue the goal of full and verifiable disarmament, within a time bound framework, and as a matter of urgency.

We further call on these States to enhance transparency with respect to all nuclear weapons, as an essential confidence-building measure. We also stress the need for the full implementation of the concrete
actions leading to nuclear disarmament, in line with conclusions and recommendations adopted at the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

As we approach 2015, we welcome and join the renewed momentum, led by a growing cross-regional group of States and civil society, to take concrete action toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To this end, we were pleased to participate in the recent Ministerial meeting to mark the inaugural International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September.

We also strongly support efforts to place humanitarian concerns at the forefront of the discourse on nuclear weapons. This position reflects our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation, whether accidental or deliberate, which highlights the urgent need for a ban on these weapons. Our participation in both the Oslo and Nayarit Conferences is evidence of our strong desire to see much needed progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We, therefore, look forward to participating in the next International Conference in Vienna later this year.

We continue to underscore the need for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Renewed efforts should be made at the political level to bring it into force. There is need for renewed momentum and greater public awareness to bring pressure to bear on moving this process forward, especially in relation to ratification by the Annex II countries.

On a more positive note, Mr. Chairman, Jamaica applauds the role that nuclear weapon free zones have played in strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Without doubt, these agreements have contributed significantly to the promotion of regional security and stability. We in the Caribbean are party to the Treaty of Tlateloco, which has long served as a model for the creation of other zones. We therefore join the call for the convening of the Conference to establish a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, without further delay. The conference presents a fortuitous opportunity that we dare not squander.

Mr. Chairman,

The confirmed use of chemical weapons in the ongoing conflict in Syria, by the United Nations Human Rights Council earlier this year, represents a timely reminder of the urgent need for the international
community to deepen its resolve and commitment to totally eliminate these weapons, as well as all nuclear, radiological and biological weapons and their delivery systems.

In recognition of this urgency, Jamaica, like other CARICOM Member States, continues to make significant progress in meeting these important non-proliferation obligations, as mandated by UNSCR 1540 and the three non-proliferation regimes: the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention.

Notwithstanding other significant challenges facing our country on the security front, Jamaica continues to commit considerable resources to implementing legislation, attendant regulations, and administrative controls to prevent the transshipment, transit, import, export, and brokering of dual-use materials and other strategic goods which can be used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Progress in meeting these key objectives has been significantly aided by our ongoing cooperation with the CARICOM-UNSCR 1540 Implementation Programme, which has coordinated meaningful assistance with other key partners, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Interpol, and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Given the Programme's role in advancing regional non-proliferation efforts and its recent designation as the Regional Focal Point for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee to aid CARICOM Member States' work in the implementation of UNSCRs 1373 and 1624, it is critical that it continues to receive adequate support to assist Member States in undertaking these important obligations.

Mr. Chairman, Jamaica continues to attach high importance to the participation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and in particular in connection with the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict. We are well-pleased, therefore, that the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons acknowledged the importance of promoting the participation of women in the PoA. The inclusion of strong provisions for gender-based violence in the Arms Trade Treaty is also of particular significance.
As such, we are fully supportive of the annual resolution piloted by Trinidad and Tobago on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and look forward to its adoption this year by consensus as in previous years.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, in less than a year our leaders will gather in a high-level Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development agenda, at the core of which is the eradication of poverty. Our deliberations cannot be divorced from the elaboration of the new development agenda in the coming months. Indeed, in the context of huge global military expenditures, the link between disarmament and development merits greater attention. The figures are indeed startling. Roughly one trillion dollars is now spent annually on weapons and military equipment of all kinds, consuming a massive share of the world's financial resources. As a Small Island Developing State, we are of the view that now more than ever is the opportune time to redirect significant portions of these funds to aid global development initiatives and poverty eradication strategies.

I thank you.