STATEMENT

BY

HER EXCELLENCY MS. LOIS M. YOUNG
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELIZE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE
SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(REGIONAL DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY CLUSTER)

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PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

675 Third Avenue • SUITE 1911 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017 • (212) 593-0999 • FAX: 593-0932 • www.belizemission.com
Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor to address the Committee within the Regional Disarmament Cluster. As this is the first time Belize is taking the floor in the First Committee, allow me to congratulate Jamaica, Mr. Chair, on assuming the chairmanship of this Committee.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen CARICOM Member States.

The Member States of CARICOM continue to take a practical and innovative approach at the regional and sub-regional levels in order to tackle the various security threats posed to the region, including from transnational organized crime and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. CARICOM also remains committed to play its part in the global efforts to maintain our collective security by implementing our international obligations.

CARICOM, having formally included Security as the Fourth Pillar of our regional integration, continues to engage in collective action and forge partnerships that demonstrate our commitment to confronting the illicit trade in firearms as well as shaping a framework for regional action. We take this opportunity to highlight some of our efforts towards regional disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The project “Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean” continues to benefit CARICOM countries and others in the wider Caribbean Region. With support from our neighbours in the region, we recognize that our collective ability to mark and control firearms, in order to counter the violence and crime carried out with such weapons will be strengthened. This project has also assisted countries that have signed the “Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials” to meet their obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) continues to be an important partner for CARICOM in its efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition. The Regional Centre has assisted CARICOM Member States in enhancing the capacity of our law enforcement and judicial personnel; improving our stockpile management capabilities; and in aligning our national legislation with global and regional instruments.
More than 10 countries in our region have benefitted from UNLIREC’s programme and have gained a greater capacity to manage and secure of national stockpile facilities, as a means of preventing diversion or leakage into the illicit market.

The results achieved by the partnership between the region and UNLIREC deserves notable mention. The region saw the destruction of more than 50,000 weapons and 62 tonnes of SALW ammunitions. Thirteen states in the region benefitted from the installment of permanent and sustainable technical capacity to conduct independent weapons and ammunition destruction. This Caribbean Stockpile management and small arms destruction assistance package resulted in the training of almost 1,000 security sector officials on various relevant measures to combat illicit arms trafficking and to mitigate diversion in the region.

To highlight a few concrete examples, UNLIREC conducted an armoury management course in Trinidad and Tobago, in November 2013, at the Caribbean Regional Armoury Management Training Centre. Thirteen security sector officials from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago were trained in keeping with internationally-accepted norms to manage, store, secure, inspect, maintain, repair and destroy small arms and its ammunition over the two week period.

Guyana benefitted in February 2014 from UNLIREC’s technical assistance which included hands-on training of officials from the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defence Force, the entity responsible for leading the destruction efforts. The training included the use and maintenance of destruction equipment, as well as technical know-how on managing stockpiles and destroying weapons according to internationally-accepted best practices and guidelines. There was subsequently a destruction of over 4,000 weapons and 3 tonnes of Ammunition during a mission to Guyana.

In Belize, in March 2014, UNLIREC, as part of its Firearms Destruction and Stockpile Assistance Package for Caribbean States, conducted a specialized training course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions and Explosives for legal practitioners in Belize. The organization also carried out a legal seminar where they presented the findings of UNLIREC’s legal study entitled “Norms and Legal Instruments on Firearms, Ammunition and Explosive: Belize”.

CARICOM also commends UNLIREC for its efforts in the areas of armed violence prevention, and for mainstreaming gender perspectives in the various disarmament projects being carried out throughout the region.
Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM assures the United Nations of its commitment to the full implementation of the “CARICOM- Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Programme”. We acknowledge the announcement by UNLIREC of the launch of a new programme in collaboration with the CARICOM UNSCR 1540 Coordinator to boost implementation of the UNSCR 1540 by Caribbean States. We recognize our role in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its link to the economic viability of our economies which have proven their susceptibility to external shocks.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, CARICOM welcomes The United Nations Office for Drug Control (UNODC) Regional Programme 2014-2016. The programme serves as an overarching policy framework for UNODC’s technical assistance to the Caribbean region and also supports the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy. It was developed in close collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat and the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), and many other regional partners. We look forward to working alongside UNODC as we strive to achieve the Strategic Goals aimed at strengthening the region’s capacity to combat transnational organized crime and its manifestations.

Mr. Chairman,

Our region continues to face the challenge of limited resources with which to confront the various complex security issues we face. However we are cognizant that the promotion of security is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships, assisting each other with providing the necessary financial, technical and other resources needed in the region to achieve our strategic goals.

I thank you.