



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

**National Statement
First Committee General Debate
3rd October 2022
Statement delivered by
Mr. Zachary Phillips,
Youth Delegate
Permanent Mission of
Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations**

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the twin island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, we align ourselves with the statement delivered by The Bahamas on behalf of CARICOM and by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM.
2. Mr. Chair, Mr. Mohan Pieres, PR of Sri Lanka, let me begin by congratulating you and your Bureau on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee for the 77th session. You are assured of Antigua and Barbuda's full support. We also extend gratitude to the Chair, Mr. Omar Hilale, PR of Morocco and the Bureau of the 76th session for their tireless efforts to steadily guide the work of the Committee.
3. Mr. Chair, the many economic, security and health related global crises that we are currently facing have highlighted the fundamental truth that we all need to collaborate and support each other to face and tackle shared challenges. This analogy can be used in our delegation's view to arrest many of the critical challenges addressed by the first committee. We must achieve global peace and security, based on our collective benefit, and reject divisive narratives. We also call on Member States to move beyond broad platitudes and towards tangible commitments to peace and security for the benefit of all our communities.
4. As an example, Antigua and Barbuda is deeply concerned with the devastating impacts of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Annually we repeat the refrain that the countries in the Caribbean region are not manufacturers or significant importers of small arms and ammunition. However, we continue to experience increased use of these weapons, resulting in violence amongst our citizens, bringing harm to our economies and suffering to members of our communities. We need to adjust the thrust of our consideration in the work of this committee towards armed violence that is experienced in societies all over the world. This includes violence involving armed gangs and organized crime and gender-based violence.

5. It is with this in mind that Antigua and Barbuda will co-sponsor of the biennial resolution tabled by Trinidad and Tobago, “Women, disarmament, nonproliferation and arms control,” which recognizes the pivotal role of women in efforts to address global peace and security. We urge all Member States to continue to support this critical resolution. It provides an essential link between disarmament and issues that must be addressed for our work to impact the lives of the people in our communities.
6. Mr. Chair, the international community must ensure that crucial instruments that address the trade in and misuse of SALW including the UN Programme of Action to Reduce, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UNPoA) and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument (ITI); and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) must fully reflect armed violence in all its considerations. Antigua and Barbuda will continue to raise this and look forward to the support of the international community as we acknowledge the importance of addressing pervasive SALW armed violence, recognizing that the vast majority of deaths and injuries due to SALW usually are a result of violence and crime against civilians.
7. Since the adoption of the SDGs, there has been an increased interest from the disarmament community in development, and how reducing armed violence and related insecurity can be a catalyst for achieving the goals and their targets. Target 16.4 seeks to reduce “significantly” illicit arms flows, which could be accomplished via robust implement of the UN Programmed of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) or the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
8. Tangible steps that can be taken include concerted effort to remove the silos between the discussions on development and disarmament. Antigua and Barbuda is well aware of the mounting opportunity costs of spending on national and regional security and the devastating impact that the trade of small arms and light weapons through the region, and the resulting violence, has on our communities.
9. Mr. Chair, regarding nuclear weapons, it is clear to the people of Antigua and Barbuda that any assessment of the impact of nuclear weapons provides unassailable proof that such weapons cause loss of life and displacement on a catastrophic scale. This destruction also leads to permanent damage to health and the environment and irreparable impediment to socioeconomic development and the social order. Further, as a small island developing states, we are very aware that our strategic location, porous marine borders, and socio-economic realities leave us as potential soft threats for nuclear terrorism.
10. Tangible and significant efforts that can be made in this regard include the entry into force of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Progress remains slow, but we trust that this integral treaty will soon be ratified.
11. Antigua and Barbuda commends the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021 and the convening of its First Meeting of States Parties on 21-23 June 2022, which adopted a declaration and an action plan. It is hoped that the Treaty would contribute to furthering the agreed global objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons. Antigua & Barbuda ratified this treaty in 2018 and is

fully committed to its implementation and will continue to engage constructively in the next Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

12. On this note, Antigua and Barbuda expresses its disappointment over the consecutive failures of the 9th and 10th NPT Review Conference to adopt a consensual outcome document despite constructive engagements made, and call upon the Nuclear Weapon States to demonstrate political will to enable the 11th Review Conference, to have concrete recommendations on achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. Antigua and Barbuda reiterates its readiness to engage in the future discussions and negotiations in a constructive, transparent, and inclusive manner, involving all States Parties.
13. Mr. Chair, along with the traditional concerns to international security Antigua and Barbuda also acknowledges that the advance of technology is affecting how we understand international peace and security. With the ongoing instabilities in international security around the world and mounting evidence of autonomous weapons systems being used in contemporary conflicts, political leadership is needed to avoid the devastating consequences of allowing the development and use of autonomous weapon systems to proliferate.
14. Autonomous weapon systems change the relationship between people and technology by handing over life and death decision making to machines. They disempower, disconnect and dislocate humans in the use of force and raise fundamental ethical and legal concerns. By diminishing the control of the human operator, AWS undermine accountability and responsibility in conflict and raise serious concerns over compliance with international humanitarian law principles of distinction, proportionality, precaution and the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks. Antigua and Barbuda joins the call for clear international rules to govern this upcoming threat.
15. Nationally, Antigua and Barbuda is exploring the potential new risks posed to our territorial sovereignty as a result of cyber-attacks. We have already seen in recent history the importance that States must give to increasing their cyber security. Admittedly, this task is somewhat challenging for Small Island Developing States like Antigua and Barbuda, but we are building our capacity in this area in order to protect the interests of the State and of our citizens. We acknowledge the support from the United Kingdom, and other development partners, in helping Antigua and Barbuda build its capacity in this area.
16. Mr. Chair, Antigua and Barbuda has been very pleased to work with the international community on a broad variety of issues related to disarmament and international security. We welcome the successful conclusion of the 2022 Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms. We also have benefitted greatly from support from United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), particularly through coordinated support to CARICOM. Regionally, Antigua and Barbuda works along with CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) to address our regional security concerns.
17. We have also benefited from bilateral agreements and support from many of our development partners, and we are grateful for your support. These tangible expressions

of assistance, whether it be through technology transfer, training, project funding, or otherwise, are the only way to bridge capacity gaps that may allow security weaknesses to pervade with potentially devastating consequences.

18. We commend the Youth for disarmament initiatives of the Office of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and agree with the ethos that the youth must be increased in order to achieve the long term results of international peace and security.
19. Antigua and Barbuda recognizes the significant role played by civil society in our efforts towards peace and security nationally and within the CARICOM subregion. Their unique perspective and invaluable contributions to capacity building and advocacy efforts are welcomed and appreciated, we look forward to further strengthen these relationships to achieve our shared goals.
20. Antigua and Barbuda stands with the international community as we recognize and reinforce the specific ways in which disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control can advance global peace and security as well as achieving the SDGs. We also look forward to more engagement and collaboration with SIDS and other underrepresented Member States in these discussions as we work towards the future we want, ensuring that no one is left behind.

I thank you.