



Statement by

H.E. Mr. François Jackman

**Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations
on behalf of**

CARICOM

Debate on Nuclear Weapons
First Committee

77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

October 14, 2022

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

“a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” That was the position reaffirmed by the five nuclear weapons states at the beginning of 2022. And yet, before the year has expired the Secretary-General has had cause to warn that we are in “a time of nuclear danger not seen since the height of the Cold War” and that “humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation”.

CARICOM is very concerned that despite our declared intentions as Member States, we are no closer to the goal of elimination of nuclear weapons. What is even more worrying is that we do not appear to still be in a state of stasis, but rather slipping towards a cliff's edge. We need urgent commitments to de-escalate and dial back tensions.

CARICOM urges all nuclear weapons states and others who have such weapons, and their allies, to reaffirm their assurances to non-nuclear weapons states against the use of these weapons and to resume in earnest effective steps towards denuclearisation through complete and verifiable disarmament.

Mr. Chair,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament architecture. Despite the failure of its Tenth Review Conference to arrive at a consensus outcome document this year, we urge all States Parties to consider voluntarily pursuing those commitments which were contained in the final draft. We emphasise that it is the political will of each of us that will create the environment for the security of all of us.

CARICOM is concerned that nuclear weapons continue to figure as a key component of the security doctrine of some states. Promotion of or reliance on nuclear deterrence as a security strategy merely perpetuates the false notion that we are safer by the assurance of mutual destruction. CARICOM resoundly rejects this approach and reminds that the very existence of nuclear weapons continues to present an unacceptable risk to both people and planet.

It is for this reason that CARICOM Member States support the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which entered into force in 2021. We are pleased that the 1st Meeting of States Parties was convened in Vienna this year and note that the meeting adopted a Plan of Action to promote the goals of the Treaty. All CARICOM Member States are either Parties, signatories or in process of acceding to the TPNW.

As parties to the Treaty of Tlateloco, CARICOM states are proud to be part of the first nuclear-weapons free zone encompassing a highly populated region - Latin America and the Caribbean. We remain committed to ensuring that the Americas remains a zone of peace and that to the greatest extent possible, we can safeguard the security and well-being of our citizens against the incalculable devastation that would be occasioned by any nuclear detonation in the region.

Mr. Chair,

We use this opportunity to again decry the undue and unconscionable expenditure made on nuclear weapons and systems. Countries are continuing to increase spending on their nuclear arsenals, including for modernisation and updating, contrary to commitments to disarm, decommission and destroy them. According to research, nuclear armed states spent approximately \$82 billion dollars on their nuclear arsenals last year. Trillions are being budgeted for upgrades. On the other hand, the development goals and pledges remain unfulfilled - the SDGs are underfunded and climate financing is scarce.

CARICOM again reiterates the call for nuclear weapons states to take urgent steps to reverse the role of nuclear weapons in their security strategies and instead direct funding to policies that focus on prevention, peace and

sustainable development. Investing in these areas will deliver greater security guarantees for all.

Mr. Chair,

CARICOM also views the nuclear disarmament imperative through the humanitarian lens. The consequences of intended or accidental use or detonation are incalculable. There remains today so many who have and continue to suffer from the effects of testing and use, and to an extent, we may never really know the full effect that these have had on our environment and the rippled effect on us over generations.

To think that modern weapons are up to 30 times more destructive than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki should give us more than pause - it should compel us to a halt. Imagine the unfathomable destruction and harm to life. CARICOM believes there should be due accountability to victims, and support the positive obligations entailed in the TPNW.

To conclude, I reiterate CARICOM's absolute opposition to the development, deployment, testing, upgrading, hosting and use of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm our commitment to working towards a world free of nuclear weapons. This is not only an ideal but a prerequisite to truly deliver any guarantee of peace and security for the peoples of our united nations.

I thank you.



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