The Bahamas

2005 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MAIN COMMITTEE III

STATEMENT BY NICOLE ARCHER
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY [CARICOM]

23 MAY 2005

Please check against delivery
Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community. Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your election to guide the work of this Committee. You can be assured of our full support in carrying out your endeavours.

Madam Chair,

The countries of the Caribbean are strongly committed to the issue of nuclear safety and have consistently expressed our concern regarding the critical issue of the transboundary movement of radioactive materials. As stated during the General Debate, the member states of CARICOM were particularly heartened by the endorsement, by the 2000 Review Conference, of the IAEA regulations for the safe transport of radioactive materials. The transshipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea, and the concomitant threat to the environmental and economic sustainability of the small island developing states of the region, remain of grave concern to CARICOM. CARICOM States have constantly voiced their concerns in this regard in numerous fora, including the General Assembly, and explicit reference was made to this issue in the Mauritius Strategy adopted by the International Meeting to review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius in January of this year.

In this context, CARICOM welcomed the 2000 Review Conference’s definitive recognition of the concerns of small island developing states and other coastal states with regard to the transportation of radioactive materials by sea, and viewed this as an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the international community to protect the marine space of in-muse coastal states from the risks inherent in the transport of these materials. We are particularly encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the IAEA in this regard, including the adoption of the Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste, and the annual resolution adopted by the IAEA General Conference on Measures to Strengthen International Cooperation in Nuclear, Radiuon and Transport Safety and Waste Management. We call on all States to fully implement these instruments, including the call for States shipping radioactive materials to provide assurances to potentially affected States that their national regulations take into account IAEA Transport Regulations, and to provide relevant information relating to shipments of such materials. CARICOM States recognize the need for safety and security relating to these shipments and the right of States under Article IV of the NPT to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, we affirm that these considerations should not be inimical to the sustainable development of other states, and reaffirm that nuclear energy should not be harnessed only for peaceful purposes in the service of global development.

In addition to the provision of information regarding the shipment of radioactive materials, CARICOM States have continued to call for the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework to promote state responsibility with respect to disclosure, prior informed consent, liability and compensation in the event of accidents. While we appreciate the steps undertaken by States to prevent the
likelihood of accidents, we cannot overstate the damage that would be done to the ecosystems of our countries, and the potentially catastrophic impact on our vulnerable economies should an accident occur.

CARICOM States have indicated their readiness to engage in constructive dialogue with the relevant States in this process, in order to improve our mutual understanding, to build confidence and to enhance our communication, as we seek to take the necessary steps to ensure the sustainability and safety of the small island States of our region.

Accordingly, the countries of the Caribbean have drafted a proposal for consideration by this Committee for inclusion in the outcome of this Conference, which would address some of our concerns, and be a useful input into this process of dialogue. This proposal has been circulated as Conference Room paper...

Under this proposal, the Conference would recognize the dangers posed to coastal populations and to route States by the transportation of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level nuclear waste, would acknowledge the concerns of small island developing states and other coastal states in this regard, and would reaffirm the need for the transportation of radioactive materials to be conducted in compliance with relevant international standards of nuclear safety and security and environmental protection. The Conference would also reiterate its call to all States shipping radioactive materials to provide assurances to potentially affected States that their national regulations take into account the IAEA's recently amended Transport Regulations, and to provide relevant information relating to shipments of such materials, while taking account of the need for physical protection and safety of these shipments. Finally, the Conference would reaffirm the need for the further development and strengthening of international regulatory regimes to enhance safety, disclosure, liability, security and compensation in relation to such transport, and would suggest principles to underpin this regime.

Madam Chair,

CARICOM expresses the hope that the language of this Conference Room Paper will be included in the report of this Committee and reflected in the Final Documents of this Conference. We remain ready to engage constructively with all delegations on this issue which is of vital importance to our region.

Thank you.