



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. STAFFORD NEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

IN

**THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE:
(AGENDA ITEMS 62 – 80)**

OF THE

**58TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of The Bahamas on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). My delegation wishes however to make the following additional remarks.

Mr. Chairman

The goal of general and complete disarmament including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains a longstanding priority of the United Nations. Yet, efforts to achieve this objective in the long term have been less than encouraging, particularly so over the past year. There has been evidence of a gradual weakening of the existing legal regime governing international disarmament, exacerbated in part on a reliance to resort to actions which fall outside the ambit of the principles of collective security. This has led to situations where the will of the many has been overcome by the might of the few thus threatening a global, collective approach to disarmament.

Jamaica therefore shares the concern expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General that there needs to be a strengthening of global disarmament norms. In our view, such a strengthening has to be based on an adherence to multilateral principles carried out in an atmosphere of mutual confidence, non-discrimination, increased transparency, compliance and trust.

Of concern also are new precepts, some of which do not yet have a basis within the international legal regime, which add to instances of parallel disarmament efforts and do little to ensure lasting peace and security. Rather, such actions contribute to a climate of insecurity, erode confidence and lead to a counterproductive and unsatisfactory situation of instability.

It is within such a situation that the global community also finds itself facing new and worrisome threats to international peace and security, including the possibility of access by non-state actors to weapons of mass destruction. Jamaica fully agrees with the need for decisive international action in dealing with these trends but urges that the search for solutions should be based within a collective, non-discriminatory and transparent framework.

Mr. Chairman,

The steadily increasing expenditure in armaments which now totals approximately \$800 billion in current prices is a cause of concern for my delegation. While the majority of this expenditure is dominated by a few large

spenders, many other countries have deemed it necessary to increase spending in armaments as a response to perceived internal or external security threats. Jamaica is of the view that increased militarization increases the likelihood of a military response as a first option to the resolution of conflict and does little to enhance security and ensure a lasting peace.

This increase in military expenditure is in contrast to the somewhat lower figures governing the arms trade in conventional weapons, which according to SIPRI estimates remained at a post-cold war low over a five year period. Continued activity in the levels of arms transfers was accountable in part to the fight against terrorism. In other cases, these arms were used by government forces in intra-state conflicts. Of added concern are the dangers inherent in the illegal transfers of conventional weapons which do much to assist transnational organized crime.

Mr. Chairman

Jamaica remains committed to the cause of general and complete disarmament. This commitment has been made evident by Jamaica's ratification of a number of disarmament conventions, its compliance with its obligations under these conventions or the active pursuit of appropriate measures to ensure compliance. We remain fully supportive of the aims and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in seeking to eliminate the spread and use of nuclear weapons particularly in the strengthening of the regime in relation to vertical and horizontal proliferation. Jamaica attaches importance to the adherence to the Article VI obligations which gives greater credibility to the NPT.

In relation to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Jamaica signed the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement on 19 March 2003.

Jamaica supports the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and participated in its First Review Conference. We have also been working actively with the OPCW Secretariat to promote the universality of the CWC within the Caribbean region. At this juncture, I wish to express appreciation to the Director-General of the OPCW for the technical assistance which has been made available to Jamaica so as to allow for our effective implementation and administration of the Convention.

As a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Jamaica supports and urges its early entry into force. As part of this process, Jamaica was pleased to host in December 2002 a Workshop on International Cooperation and National Implementation of the CTBT which attracted participants from the Caribbean and Latin American sub region.

Jamaica continues to regret the continued stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that it may now be appropriate for there to be a review of the working methods and decision making machinery of this body. Such a review could be carried out within the context of the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament , the holding of which Jamaica fully supports.

Mr. Chairman,

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects remains integral to the establishment of global norms to deal with the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

The First Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action which took place here in New York in July provided a useful and timely opportunity to take stock of the progress of implementation. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan for her successful chairmanship of this meeting.

We look forward to the second biennial meeting to be held in 2005 as well as the Review Conference in 2006.

Jamaica was honoured to have been a member of the group of Governmental Experts established by the Secretary-General on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We fully support the necessity of an international convention on the marking and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons and urge this Committee to agree to the recommendation made by the Group for the launching of negotiations for such an international instrument.

As a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, Jamaica welcomes the successful conclusion of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention held recently in Thailand and looks forward to the First Review Conference to be held in 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. We urge the full implementation of this Convention and wish to commend those countries which have taken active steps to destroy their stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. Jamaica intends to cosponsor the resolution on the implementation of the convention to be introduced by Thailand during this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the important work of this Committee. You can be assured of the support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties particularly as you seek to examine ways and means to streamline the work of this Committee which we believe should be within the context of overall revitalization of the General Assembly. I also welcome the new Under-Secretary of Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe and applaud him and the other members of his Department for the commendatory work they are doing to advance the attainment of international peace and security.

Thank you.