



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY**

*His Excellency Mr. Stafford Neil  
Permanent Representative/Ambassador of Jamaica to the United Nations*

**TO THE**

**59<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**IN THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE**

New York, October 8, 2004

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of the Bahamas on behalf of CARICOM countries. I would wish however to make the following additional observations.

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of general and complete disarmament continues to be elusive. It was hoped that this year would have been marked by a renewed confidence and optimism in the disarmament agenda. Regrettably this has not been the case. In an almost ritualistic fashion, this Committee has been compelled to repeat the litany of failures of the past year all of which are well known to us. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, the list rather than diminishing seems to have gained a momentum of its own.

My delegation continues to be concerned at the apparent inertia in the disarmament agenda evidenced by lack of consensus in the Conference on Disarmament in spite of attempts to break the deadlock; the failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to agree on its agenda; the stalemate in the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Preparatory process; continued proliferation of weapons and the non compliance with or the non entry into force of key multilaterally negotiated disarmament treaties. It is perhaps time to consider how best to reinvigorate the different parts of the disarmament machinery including by way of a thorough review of their working methods and a possible change in the manner in which decisions are taken. We maintain that such a consideration should best be carried out within the context of the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament, the holding of which Jamaica fully supports.

Mr. Chairman,

We agree that there is some merit in addressing the working methods and procedures of this Committee in order to improve its effectiveness. Some of the suggestions put forward and those which have been implemented under your chairmanship will assist in improving the efficiency of this Committee. At the same time, we are of the view that the real challenge lies in garnering the requisite political will and commitment to achieve the stated goals and objectives of this Committee as these pertain to disarmament and non-proliferation. The demonstration of such commitment, in accordance with Charter principles and obligations and in compliance with the relevant multilaterally negotiated disarmament treaties, is vital to any improvement in the effectiveness of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has been all too painfully aware that within the last few years there have been continued threats to international peace and security. While we agree that the relative newness and impact of certain threats represent dangerous challenges to global security, international response in dealing with these phenomena should not be at the expense of previously stated multilateral commitments in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, there should be a balanced consideration of all threats to international security and any action should not be at variance with stated Charter goals and objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has read with interest the report of the Group of Governmental Experts so ably chaired by Ambassador Rivas of Colombia, on the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context contained in document (A/59/119). We agree with the observation that "...security in all its aspects continues to play a crucial role in both

disarmament and development". At the same time, we are concerned that world military spending has increased to a total of \$956 billion dollars with about 75 per cent of this figure being expended by developed countries. We are equally concerned that there will be a renewal of the arms race as states invest in more deadly weapons for achieving security. The possibility of increased military spending due to increased instances of conflict is also a source of anxiety.

While recognizing the sovereign right of states to ensure their self-defence, it is however all too clear that there has not been comparable spending in promoting economic development or in alleviating poverty. This is even more striking when one takes into account that one year before the five year review of the Millennium Development Goals, the international community is still far too short of achieving the goals it set for itself in the year 2000.

It is in this context that we believe that a far more practical approach in addressing security concerns would be to take into consideration the important developmental needs of persons. For, Mr. Chairman, in spite of impressive arsenals and sophisticated weaponry, the desperate minds of the dissatisfied and dispossessed can fashion a dangerous weapon out of any object.

Mr. Chairman,

Resolution 1540 of the Security Council has highlighted the possibility of non-state actors gaining control and access to weapons of mass destruction. We agree that this is a pressing and troubling possibility but maintain that a preferable approach would be eliminate these weapons in their entirety so as to prevent any chance of unauthorized access. It is also important that such binding commitments should more properly be negotiated in a more inclusive, open and comprehensive manner.

Jamaica shares the concern expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General that there needs to be a return to the rule of law and adherence to international norms. Such an approach is vitally

needed in the area of disarmament where clearly established norms and treaty obligations should be upheld and respected in a non-discriminatory, balanced and transparent manner thus ensuring that collective security continues to be governed by a rules based regime.

Mr. Chairman

Jamaica remains committed to the cause of general and complete disarmament. This commitment is evident by Jamaica's ratification of a number of disarmament conventions, its compliance with its obligations under these conventions and 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 and attach importance to the adherence to the Article VI obligations which gives greater credibility to the NPT. We hope that these and other issues will be fully addressed in the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation continues to reaffirm its support for the early conclusion of an international convention to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons. As explained by the Bahamas, we do not produce these weapons but yet we have to contend with the destabilizing effects of these weapons on our economies and societies. In our view, these real and immediate challenges to our peace and stability constitute a new and troubling threat to international security.

We therefore reiterate our commitment to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects and look forward to the second biennial meeting to be held in 2005 as well as the Review Conference in 2006.

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 convening of the First Review Conference to be held in 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. We urge the full implementation of this Convention and commend those countries which have taken active steps to comply with its provisions.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to express my own personal satisfaction on your election as Chairman of this Committee. We are confident that under your skilful leadership you, and the other members of the Bureau, will steer this year's deliberations of the First Committee to a successful conclusion. You can be assured of the support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties. I also thank Under-Secretary of Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe and the other members of his Department for the work they are doing to advance the attainment of international peace and security. Permit me also to extend a special word of congratulation to the new Secretary of the Committee, Ms. Cheryl Stoute, a dedicated and hard-working national from the Caribbean. We are confident that the administrative matters of this Committee will be in safe hands. I understand also that she is the first female to be appointed to this important position and I commend the Secretariat for its vision in making this appointment.

Thank you.