STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

ON

AGENDA ITEMS 108: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
&
109: International Drug Control

IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on Agenda Item 108: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and Item 109: International Drug Control, on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

I thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive reports provided under these agenda items. CARICOM takes note of the information provided therein and is supportive of the ongoing work of the UNODC in partnering with Member States to tackle the pervasive issues of organized crime and citizen security. We endorse the call for the UNODC to support Member States in capacity-building, and for Member States to address the need to adequately resource the UNODC in furtherance of its mandate.

We consider that, with the evolving nature of transnational organized crime, no region is immune from the effects of crime and violence. In fact, within our own region, we have been faced with addressing emerging and persistent trends that threaten to derail progress towards sustainable development and the creation of an environment that fosters economic growth and inclusive development. Our response to these challenges needs to be coordinated, multi-faceted and sustained.

Recognising this, the Heads of State and Government of CARICOM declared Crime and Security as the fourth pillar of our Community’s integration movement. To strengthen the region’s response, a CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy was adopted in February 2013. We are heartened to note that the UNODC expects to launch its first regional programme for the Caribbean for the period 2013 – 2016 in support of this Strategy.

Among the key goals of the strategy are increasing trans-border intelligence and information sharing; strengthening mechanisms against human trafficking; targeting criminal assets and protecting the financial system; and strengthening the effectiveness of criminal investigation, through application of modern technologies and scientific techniques.

Mr. Chairman,

Crime and corruption has a deleterious effect on the quest for development. The fight against crime is therefore a fight in support of human development. In this regard, CARICOM takes the view that there is no separation between the development agenda and crime prevention. The illicit flow of drugs and firearms has myriad negative consequences for our region. They contribute to gang violence, negative social behaviours, diversion of precious resources, loss of productivity and loss of revenue and income from potential investors and tourism. These are not issues that can be sufficiently
tackled by any one country or group of countries. These matters require a cohesive global response.

We are pleased that the historic Arms Trade Treaty was adopted in April of this year and that it includes measures to address the flow of small arms and light weapons. I cannot overemphasize how critical this is for the Caribbean, which is an acknowledged transit region for the flow of guns and ammunition, some of which are diverted and remain in the region. This contributes significantly to the domestic crime problem which exacerbates the insidious cycle of crime, poverty and underdevelopment. CARICOM will work with its partners, in particular those states where these weapons originated, to achieve meaningful results in this area. In our strong support of international efforts in this regard, 13 CARICOM Member States have already signed the Treaty and 3 have ratified. We therefore encourage parties to the ATT to provisionally apply the treaty in good faith, where possible, even prior to its entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

The inter-linkages and networks of transnational organized crime have grown more elaborate and resilient. In fact, in many ways some criminal networks are more resourced, connected and informed than some states. They are often at the cutting-edge of evolving technologies, which they adeptly employ when conducting their criminal enterprises. The Secretary-General’s report (document A/68/127) makes note of emerging trends that need to be tackled, such as cybercrime, trafficking in cultural property and the use of new technologies to abuse and exploit children.

The international community needs to keep itself not one, but several steps ahead of these criminal enterprises. We need to be innovative and creative in developing new means of tracking, controlling and preventing both evolving and established activities. We are, therefore, pleased to note the proposed plans of the UNODC to address these emerging trends, and call for special attention to be paid to small and vulnerable developing countries that may lack the full capacity to sustain efforts to counter these criminal activities. To disregard these countries would be to leave significant loopholes through which these nimble and sophisticated trans-national criminal enterprises could slip; to the detriment of us all. The chain will only be as strong as its weakest link.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is extremely concerned about the nexus between trafficking in firearms, human trafficking and drug trafficking. We recognize that these intertwined activities present an enormous challenge to the region and indeed the wider world. We therefore welcome the proposed study by the UNODC on the links between firearm trafficking and other forms of trafficking, as well as the study on trans-national routes.
and the modus operandi used in firearms trafficking, which should assist Member States in developing and enhancing responses to counter these crimes.

Mr. Chairman,

While political will and our collective social conscience may support measures to tackle crime and the international drug problem, these need to be manifested by action, resources and effective infrastructure. Without adequate investment in these areas public confidence and, by extension, our success in winning the war on crime, will suffer. In many small countries, the criminal justice system is in need of modernization in order to adequately meet the demands of a heavy case load, complex investigations, comprehensive evidence gathering, as well as the location and protection of witnesses. Our systems can also benefit from innovative means of reform, such as implementing restorative justice principles and the identification of feasible non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment. We wish to highlight UNODC’s work in the region in this area, and encourage further and additional partnerships to enhance capacity in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

As we look at the post-2015 development agenda during this 68th Session, the route towards achieving sustainable development encompasses numerous cross-cutting issues. CARICOM reiterates that building societies on a platform of justice, security and the rule of law is essential to laying the groundwork for achieving sustainable development. This will require a multi-faceted collaborative approach that goes beyond the deployment of hard security assets to encompass social intervention and public education strategies. In working together, through the United Nations system as well as regionally or bilaterally, we can safeguard and protect our societies from the ravages of criminal activities. Our goal must be to ensure that with no place to hide, criminal enterprises can be dismantled and that the socio-economic conditions that spawned them can be sustainably redressed.

Mr. Chairman, CARICOM stands ready.

Thank you.