STATEMENT

by

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on Agenda Items 108 on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and 109 on International Drug Control

in the Third Committee of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to align itself with the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the informative reports produced under this agenda item. In order to respect the time limits allotted for the delivery of statements in the Committee, we will deliver a shortened version and make available online the full text of our statement.

Mr. Chairman,

Grave challenges plague our society resulting from various forms of criminal activity, including those linked to the illicit drug trade. Trinidad and Tobago, in an effort to effectively address this scourge, remains strongly committed to crime prevention and criminal justice. To this end, we have been cooperating with a number of external partners on crime prevention initiatives, as well as to strengthen criminal justice programmes.

The Ministry of National Security, for example, has been involved in a number of crime prevention programmes related to citizen security, promoting the value as well as improving the quality of life, and mentorship. One particular 6 year citizen security project funded by the International Development Bank (IDB) began in 2008 with the aim of reducing crime and violence in "high needs" pilot communities in Trinidad and Tobago through community action, assisting the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the institutional strengthening of the Ministry of National Security. This approach is in line with the provision of resolution 67/189 adopted during the 67th session of the General Assembly which encouraged States to "have national and local action plans for crime prevention in order to take into account, in a comprehensive, integrated and participatory manner, inter alia, factors that place certain populations and places at higher risk of victimization and/or offending". Recognizing the success of the programme, the Government took the decision to extend it until 2016. It is expected that through this initiative, levels of homicide, robberies and assaults, as well as injuries related to the use of firearms, child abuse, domestic violence and youth violence will be reduced, thereby creating safer communities.

Another key initiative is the "The Making Life Important" programme. This seeks to provide relief and comfort to, as well as facilitate reform in communities in the short, medium and long term, respectively, in order to build safe, orderly and peaceful communities through, among others, a number of policing, social and economic development programmes. Over the past three years, a number of projects have been completed under this initiative in the areas of education and training, infrastructural works, environmental resource management, policy and research, stakeholder and community engagement, sports and culture, and health and safety. There are also ongoing projects and various others proposed to be embarked upon in the near future.

Additionally, the national mentorship programme was established, Mr. Chairman, having recognized the fundamental importance of nurturing and supportive relationships between adults and children, and adults and youths, as well as the increased vulnerability of youth who have not had this experience to a host of difficulties, ranging from academic failure to engaging in high-
risk behaviors. The programme is one which fosters the creation of positive differences in youth behavior and development to assist and guide our youth in becoming socially, psychologically and emotionally balanced as well as economically secure adults who contribute positively to society.

Mr. Chairman,

Drug trafficking and the use and abuse of illicit drugs continue to constitute a serious threat to public health, safety and the general well being of the society, particularly for young children and youth, despite increasing efforts of States, relevant organizations and civil society. Associated challenges also threaten national security and sovereignty, undermines socio-economic and political stability and affects sustainable development.

In its strong commitment to therefore address the impact of the illicit drug trade on our society, economy and development, Trinidad and Tobago has taken a number of steps including developing structured programmes to provide marketable skills and other opportunities to high-risk youths; developing more relevant social programmes to address major issues such as family disintegration, unemployment, poverty and lack of social support; establishing Drug Treatment Courts and other options for rehabilitation; and increasing sensitization programmes and education about the negative effects of illegal drug use.

Since 2000, Mr. Chairman, the Government established the National Drug Council to monitor, evaluate and coordinate the implementation of the national anti-drug plan. Currently, a new Drug Policy for 2013 and its Operational Plan for the period 2013-2017 are being finalized. At the national level, there is also cooperation between Government agencies, non-governmental, community and faith-based organizations, in the areas of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, social reintegration, recovery support services and after care.

The drug problem, however, Mr. Chairman, remains a global one, to effectively address which we must deepen our cooperation and share the responsibilities. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago continues to promote bilateral, regional and international cooperation in areas such as intelligence-sharing and cross-border cooperation, with a view to encouraging collaboration among States most directly affected by illicit crop cultivation, as well as the production, transit, trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

As a responsible member of the international community, we have also ratified a number of international instruments including the UN Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988; the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto; and the UN Convention against Corruption. In accordance with these Conventions, Trinidad and Tobago fulfills its obligations, including those related to reporting in relation to all aspects of the world drug problem to the UNODC through the various questionnaires.

The related trade in small arms and lights weapons, Mr. Chairman, is a critical challenge for Member States of our subregion as it presents significant challenges to achieving our development goals. Trinidad and Tobago therefore welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade
Treaty earlier this year, the negotiation of which saw the active participation of our delegation. Subsequently, Trinidad and Tobago signed the Treaty at the ceremony in which the Treaty was opened for signature in June of this year. Furthermore, in September at the recently concluded high-level segment of the 68th session of the General Assembly, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was among the first to deposit the instrument of ratification for the Treaty. As a traditionally strong advocate for the adoption of the Treaty and a strong upholder of the rule of law, we would be grateful for the support of Member States for the establishment of the Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman,

We also wish to take this opportunity to commend the work of the UNODC in supporting Member States in their undertakings to effectively address crime as well as the world drug problem.

Although efforts are being made at the national level in collaboration with regional and international partners, we have not yet achieved the desired results in the fight against crime, including the adequate strengthening of the criminal justice system. One important factor in being able to do is possessing the capacity to collect and analyse relevant data. We have indicated in various fora our great need for assistance to acquire the appropriate capacity or systems, including for data collection and analysis, and take this opportunity to signal our interest in the technical assistance being offered by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to strengthen the capacity of criminal justice systems to investigate and prosecute all forms of crime; to protect the human rights and fundamental freedom of defendants, as well as the legitimate interests of victims and witnesses; and to ensure access to effective legal aid in criminal justice systems. Additionally, consideration is being given to putting measures in place to address the emerging policy issues identified by the UNODC.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its resolve to continue collaborating with all partners as we work to prevent crime in all its forms and manifestations and strengthen our criminal justice systems in an effort to provide safe and peaceful environments which facilitate our productivity, growth and overall development.

I thank you.