STATEMENT

on Behalf of the CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

by

H.E. Ambassador George Talbot
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana

On the


United Nations Headquarters

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Mr. President,

I am both pleased and honoured to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community in today's joint debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support; and on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa [62 (a) and (b)], and 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa [12].

Our delegations extend gratitude to the Secretary-General for his insightful reports under the respective agenda items, contained in documents A/69/161, A/69/162 and A/69/163.

The Caribbean and Africa are joined by strong ties of history and culture. Those ties, reinforced by common struggles for political independence and economic emancipation, against colonialism and apartheid, now find continuing expression in our mutual quest for peace, justice and sustainable development. They undergird the traditionally fraternal relations that exist between our two regions.

Mr. President,

Today's debate takes place against the background of an unprecedented Ebola epidemic that is currently ravaging countries in West Africa. That epidemic threatens to reverse peacebuilding and development gains on the Continent and poses serious risks on a more global scale. CARICOM takes this opportunity to express our solidarity with the affected countries, most notably Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and with the continent as a whole. We call for a massively scaled up global response in order to turn tide of the disease and to undo any impact on peace and development.

CARICOM renews its principled support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. African ownership and leadership is fundamental to the success of the NEPAD framework. We therefore emphasize the importance of the alignment of international support with the priorities determined by Africans themselves.
Our Community also welcomes the elaboration of the continental Agenda 2063 as an endogenous, Shared Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, for Africa's transformation over the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 seeks to realize the Pan-African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa" and includes a near term objective of a conflict-free Africa. CARICOM considers that this agenda is deserving of strong support by the international community, alongside the efforts of African countries, with a view to ensuring that its objectives are fully realised.

In that context, the immediate threats to peace need to be effectively addressed and viable mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding established or strengthened. Existing conflict situations, the threat of terrorism and violent extremism, and transnational organised crime will test the determination both of Africa and the international community to see peace and development take a permanent and irreversible course on the continent.

Even as Africa continues to grapple with significant challenges to peace and development, the continent has witnessed major development gains. The region showed strong resilience with GDP growth averaging 4 per cent in 2013. According to the African Economic Outlook 2014, growth in Africa is expected to return to the pre-crisis level of 6.5 per cent. While making for a promising outlook, such a growth rate is still below the 7 per cent target regarded as critical for sustained poverty reduction and progress toward achievement of the MDGs. Moreover the impact of Ebola on Africa's socioeconomic and security prospects are yet to be fully assessed.

There is therefore a clear need to strengthen international support in order to consolidate and assure the sustainability of the gains that have been made. Global ODA commitments, including those made to Africa in particular, need to be honoured in full. In addition, based on the findings of the secretary-General's report, significantly greater progress needs to be made in addressing the debt problems of the continent. The international trading system needs to be made more responsive to the development imperative. Expanding the flows of foreign
direct investment will also be an important priority in ensuring that Africa's productive potential is harnessed to full advantage. The role of South-South cooperation will be integral to the global response.

CARICOM notes with appreciation major initiatives underway through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme to buttress agricultural development and food security, as a key plank of the region's development thrust. We also note the intensified efforts by African countries to accelerate infrastructure development. The Dakar Agenda for Action, adopted in June of this year, provides a framework for the financing of key regional infrastructure projects, which are critical to unleashing Africa's growth potential.

CARICOM continues to support Africa's quest to improve governance and accountability, reflecting our shared commitments in that regard. Increasing subscription by African countries to the processes of the African Peer Review Mechanism is a testament to the efficacy of this instrument in promoting good governance on the continent. We also share Africa's commitment to potentiating the role of women and youth in the promotion of durable peace and socio-economic transformation.

CARICOM expresses the hope that the stability being experienced by most African countries will be sustained and that setbacks to peace and security will be overcome. We therefore support United Nations and African Union (AU) efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, which are critical to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development. We reaffirm our support for Africa's aspiration to permanent seats and enhanced non-permanent presence on the Security Council.

The burden of disease is a continuing obstacle to Africa's progress. Malaria continues to pose a significant challenge to Africa and a broader remit of developing countries. The WHO estimates that 207 million cases in 2012 led to approximately 627,000 deaths, most of them in Africa. While significant gains have been made since 2000 in the fight against malaria, stepped-up action is essential to achieve MDG targets in this area.
HIV/AIDS is another major threat to health and wellbeing in Africa and in the Caribbean. In May this year, CARICOM joined forces with the African Union to explore the role of shared responsibility and the global solidarity agenda in ending the AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean, drawing lessons from the 2012 AU Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, TB and Malaria Response in Africa, which has helped to transform the response on the continent to these diseases. This process facilitated further links between countries of both regions regarding their HIV and health responses. The mutual threat posed by non-communicable diseases in our respective regions is another area of common concern and collaboration.

Mr. President, in conclusion CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to collaboration with Africa in addressing common challenges to peace and development and contributing to a more prosperous and secure world.

I thank you.