



# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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## STATEMENT

By

H.E. Ambassador Eden Charles

Deputy Permanent Representative of

Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations

in the Sixth Committee

on Agenda 85:

The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels

at the 68<sup>th</sup> Session United Nations General Assembly

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United Nations Headquarters,  
09 October, 2013

Mr. Chairman

Trinidad and Tobago has the honour to participate in this debate on the rule of law at the national and international levels. We also align with the Statements delivered by the delegation of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States ("CELAC") and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement ("NAM").

We welcome the Report of the Secretary- General contained in document A/68/213, as it represents an indication of the progress and challenges faced over the past year in promoting and safeguarding the rule of law at the national and international levels.

Mr. Chairman

A year has passed since the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rule of Law at the national and international levels. On that occasion, Trinidad and Tobago was among those States which reaffirmed its solemn commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and justice, and to an international order based on the rule of law, which are indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Trinidad and Tobago also pledged to work with other Member States in addressing the implementation deficit which existed in the practice of the rule of law at the global level. Our efforts and those of other Member States have produced some positive results in the development of international rules which are essential for the maintenance of the rule of law. This was exemplified last April, when the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The adoption of this historic Instrument ensures that there now exist a body of law to regulate the trade in conventional arms. The entry into force of this Treaty would assist in preventing, among other things, the diversion of for example, small arms and light weapons and ammunition from the illegal trade to the illicit market. The diversion of these weapons and other armaments has had adverse effects on the

rule of law in many regions of the globe because of the linkages to armed conflict and armed violence.

Trinidad and Tobago as one of the seven States which have ratified the ATT is requesting that all other States which have not as yet done so, consider signing and ratifying the Treaty in order to enable its early entry into force.

Mr. Chairman

On December 12, 2012, the international community commemorated the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the Convention). After three (3) decades, the Convention has proven to be the primary instrument which enables States to observe the rule of law in their international relations in our oceans and seas, as many of its provisions are accepted as customary international law. Trinidad and Tobago has relied on the Convention in many areas, including, for example, the delimitation of our maritime boundaries as well as in the conclusion of arrangements for the unitization of hydrocarbon resources which straddle the maritime boundaries with our neighbours.

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, while many States continue to rely on the Convention in discharging their obligations relating to the law of the sea, there is need for the negotiation of an agreement on a common set of rules governing the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. We therefore welcome efforts aimed at establishing the process for the conclusion of an international agreement under the Convention governing these resources. This is essential so that the rule of law would be in place to ensure that the economic and other benefits to be derived from the exploration and exploitation of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction is not done for the benefit of a few States with advanced technology, but for the benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman

Trinidad and Tobago is very supportive of the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to commence dialogue in a meaningful way on the post 2015 Development Agenda during the current session of the General Assembly. As was the case with the MDGs, we wish to underscore that respect for the rule of law is an important component for the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of all our peoples. We therefore look forward to participating in the High-level event to be convened by the President on the impact of human rights and the rule of law on development.

Mr. Chairman

All Member States are obligated to adhere to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which, among other things, calls for respect of the rule of law in the conduct of their international relations. Correspondingly, States are also obligated to enact laws which ensure that there are mechanisms in place for the provision of justice so that persons accused of crimes do not go unpunished. This principle is even more indispensable when the crimes in question are very grave in character and are an affront to the international community. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago remains very concerned by the failure to bring to justice persons accused of committing crimes within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, and is requesting that corrective action be taken to resolve these outstanding matters so that the accused persons are brought to justice.

Mr. Chairman

International law is norm setting and in many instances, lays the foundation upon which national law is built. As a result of this inter-relationship between national law and international law, the United Nations established decades ago,

the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law ("the Programme"). Through this initiative lawyers and other practitioners from developing and developed countries have benefitted from the hosting of workshops and seminars on several areas of international law which have to be implemented nationally. We lament however, that these programmes as well as the services provided by the Audiovisual Library of International Law administered by the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs, are in jeopardy because of inadequate financial resources to manage them. Over the years, Trinidad and Tobago and other States have made voluntary contributions for the maintenance of these programmes. These programmes were never intended, Mr. Chairman, to subsist solely on the voluntary contributions of Member States, but also with funding from the regular budget of the UN.

We are therefore very concerned that despite the clear mandate contained in operative paragraph 7 of last year's resolution adopted by the Sixth Committee which requested that funding for the Programme be obtained from the regular budget, this mandate has not been implemented. If this course of action is not rectified, the training of lawyers, especially from developing countries, in international law could be seriously undermined. It is our expectation that this year's resolution would also provide very clear and unambiguous language on the need for funding from the regular budget for the Programme and the Audiovisual Library of International Law, which has over many years assisted in the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

With regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes between and among States, Trinidad and Tobago is firm in its position that international disputes must be settled by peaceful means as enunciated in the United Nations Charter. In this regard, we recognize the important contributions made over the years by courts and tribunals such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in resolving disputes which arise in the relations among States.

Pursuant to Article 287 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Trinidad and Tobago has accepted the competence of ITLOS to settle disputes concerning the interpretation and application of the provisions of that Treaty.

In our region, we adhere to the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the original jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) to settle disputes which arise under that Treaty, which has established the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to reiterate its commitment to implement fully its obligations under the Charter of the UN to promote and defend the rule of law in its relations with all members of the international community.

Thank you.