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STATEMENT

by
Ms. Lizanne Aching
Second Secretary
of the Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
to the United Nations

on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

on

Agenda Item 80
“Criminal Accountability of United Nations Officials and Experts on
Mission”

70th Regular Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

United Nations, New York
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CARICOM underscores the critical importance of all United Nations officials and experts on mission conducting themselves in a manner which preserves the image, credibility, impartiality and integrity of the United Nations.

At the outset, we wish to recognize the invaluable contribution of United Nations officials and experts on mission, including personnel on peacekeeping operations, towards the fulfillment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the promotion of international peace and security. In our very region, the CARICOM Member State of Haiti has benefitted immensely from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which has been working towards restoring a secure and stable environment, promoting political progress, strengthening rule of law structures, as well as promoting and protecting human rights in Haiti.

Mr. Chairman,

While we applaud the commitment and dedication of all United Nations officials and experts on mission in pursuit of the objectives of the United Nations, we are also conscious of the need to bring to justice those persons who violate domestic and international law.

CARICOM remains deeply concerned over the recent allegations of misconduct and sexual abuse of women and children at United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are of the view that sexual exploitation and abuse by military, civilian police and civilian peacekeeping personnel constitutes a serious violation of international law.

The incidence of sexual exploitation at peacekeeping missions remains profoundly disturbing especially since the United Nations has been mandated to provide assistance to States which are in the process of rehabilitation in the aftermath of conflicts. Sexual exploitation and other breaches of trust undermine the credibility of the United Nations, as an institution working toward the restoration and promotion of the rule of law.

We also advance that the perpetrators of these most heinous offenses should be held accountable for their actions. Appropriate measures need to be implemented to ensure that United Nations staff and experts on mission would not be exempt from the consequences of

criminal acts committed at their duty stations in accordance with the provisions of resolution 69/114.

We, therefore, submit further, that States must establish jurisdiction over crimes committed by nationals while serving at peacekeeping missions. Consequently, we urge States to cooperate with the United Nations and other relevant entities, in the conduct of investigations and the exchange of information, in order to ensure that those engaged in criminal conduct are brought to justice. A common set of rules and regulations governing the conduct and treatment of United Nations experts and officials on mission would also assist in ensuring that those who, through their conduct in the field, bring the Organization into disrepute are held accountable.

However, we advocate that all measures must be consistent with the principles of international law, due process and applicable United Nations rules and regulations.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM welcomes the report of the Secretary General contained in document A/70/208 which provides information submitted by Member States on the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. We commend those States which have taken steps to ensure that those who have been found guilty of criminal offenses are brought to justice and that special protection is provided to victims.

We commend the Secretary-General for promoting a zero-tolerance policy on this subject, which we believe would help contribute to the restoration of faith and trust in the United Nations system.

Further, the training and sensitization of United Nations officials and experts on mission, on the need to respect the national laws of the host State and United Nations standards of conduct, as well as possible consequences should such laws and standards not be observed, are important tools to address the issue and we applaud the United Nations for steps taken in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

Consistent with its laws and international obligations, CARICOM will play its part and will also support the efforts of Member States and the United Nations, to bring to justice any United Nations official or expert on mission accused of committing criminal offences.

I thank you.