



STATEMENT

by

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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

ON AGENDA ITEM 85

**“THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL
AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS”**

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

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is of the view that a rules-based international system with clear and predictable rules, which apply equally to all Member States is inextricably linked to the achievement of lasting peace and security, the protection of human rights, sustained economic growth, social progress and the advancement of all peoples.

The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations underscores the collective responsibility of all Member States “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained”. CARICOM, therefore, reaffirms its commitment to upholding the principles of international law and justice, and to promoting an international order based on the rule of law in accordance with the provisions of resolution 69/123.

CARICOM States were founded on the principles of democracy, liberty, good governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and dignity. The fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual are protected and entrenched in the constitutions of our Member States and our legal systems incorporate provisions which promote equality before the law. Moreover, our domestic legislation is buttressed by various international treaties and conventions that promote the rule of law.

We strongly adhere to the fundamental principle of the United Nations, that everyone, from the individual right up to the State, is accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated. We, therefore, underscore our strong opposition to impunity, which is contrary to the rule of law, and our commitment to promoting the highest standards of justice and equality before the law.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary General for the comprehensive annual report which provides useful updates on developments and activities related to the rule of law over the past year and the role of multilateral treaty processes in promoting and advancing the rule of law.

We consider the sub-topic chosen for consideration under this agenda item particularly significant, given the importance of the multilateral treaty process to developing a comprehensive legal framework and promoting the rule of law at all levels.

CARICOM recognises the importance of multilateral treaties to the codification and development of customary international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes which has led to the establishment of a solid multilateral treaty framework based on the rule of law. Further, the multilateral treaty process has enabled all States to contribute meaningfully, on an equal platform, toward the development of international law and norms, regardless of size. In this regard, we wish to highlight the pioneering leadership of small States which led to the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reaffirms its continued commitment and support to the United Nations to strengthen the rule of law through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to Member States. In particular, we commend the efforts of the United Nations to provide support to Member States, upon request, in the areas of conflict prevention, law reform, access to justice, protection of refugees, corruption, counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime. In this regard, CARICOM underlines that domestic implementation of international laws are enhanced through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to Member States.

We also welcome the work of the Office of Legal Affairs toward capacity building and promoting the rule of law. An important aspect of this capacity building work is undertaken through the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. CARICOM, therefore, reiterates its call for adequate financing to be provided for all aspects of this important Programme through the regular budget of the United Nations. The current system undermines the effectiveness of the Programme which was never designed to subsist solely on voluntary contributions.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of promoting the rule of law, CARICOM welcomes the growing number of ratifications to the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We urge all States Parties of the Rome Statute, which have not yet done so, to accelerate efforts to ratify the Kampala Amendment so that it may enter into force by 2017.

We also look forward to the adoption of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the issue of conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. To this end, we welcome the implementation of resolution 69/292 which provides for the establishment of a preparatory committee, to be convened in 2016 and 2017, charged with the responsibility of making substantive recommendations to the General Assembly on the elements of the draft text for the international legally binding instrument.

We are of the view that the promotion of the rule of law at the international level must also lay the foundation for the achievement of sustainable development and the protection and sustainable management of the common heritage of mankind for present and future generations. As a group of countries from a region that is highly vulnerable to the unprecedented rate of loss of marine biodiversity and the impacts of unsustainable practices on the marine environment, particularly as it relates to the activities that are conducted in marine ecosystems beyond areas of national jurisdiction, we see the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address these matters as inextricably linked to our pursuit of justice and fairness for all.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as promoting universal adherence to the rule of law at the national and international levels.

I thank you.