



STATEMENT

by

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**On Behalf of the Caribbean Community
(CARICOM)**

on

Agenda Item 85: the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels

Sixth Committee (Legal Committee)

Seventy-second Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**United Nations, New York
4 October 2017**

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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 statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

We also thank the Secretary General for his report contained in document A/72/268 on strengthening and coordinating United Nations (UN) rule of law activities.

Mr. Chairman

CARICOM views adherence to the rule of law as crucial to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the maintenance of peace and security, the prevention of conflict, the eradication of poverty, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and sustained economic development. In dealing with the ever-increasing challenges facing our planet, including terrorism, unprecedented migration, protracted conflicts, and other global threats, it is critically important to firmly adhere to the rule of law as well as the principles of international law.

As a region, we therefore remain unwavering in our commitment to ensure universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at the national and international levels, in accordance with resolution 71/148. 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 include provisions which promote equality before the law as well as fairness in its application. CARICOM also remains committed to the implementation of effective mechanisms and institutions to enforce legal rules when they are breached. Moreover, our domestic legislation is buttressed by various international treaties and conventions that promote the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman

CARICOM underscores the importance of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to promoting the rule of law, encouraging respect for human rights and achieving sustainable peace and development, in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter of the UN. We therefore reiterate our unequivocal commitment to the ICC and its

primary objective to help put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, as well as the prevention of such heinous crimes.

With a view to promoting its universality, CARICOM, urges all States Parties which have not yet done so, to ratify and fully implement the Rome Statute of the ICC. We also recall the decision made at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute in 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, for the Court to exercise its jurisdiction over the crime of aggression once 30 States have ratified the amendments, and subject to a decision of the Assembly to activate that jurisdiction. In this regard, we look forward to the upcoming decision of the Assembly to activate the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression this year.

CARICOM also affirms the important role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and recognizes its valuable contribution in shaping international jurisprudence. We urge all Member States to support the work of the ICJ in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman

Promotion of the rule of law at the international level must lay the foundation for the achievement of sustainable development and the protection and sustainable management of the common heritage of mankind for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Caribbean region remains 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 areas beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Given the importance of oceans to our survival, it is imperative that urgent action is taken to address this matter.

CARICOM views the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address existing regulatory and legal gaps and ensure that the resources of our oceans are properly conserved and managed for the benefit of present and future generations as inextricably linked to our pursuit of justice and fairness for all.

In this context, CARICOM welcomes the adoption of the Recommendations of the Preparatory Committee established pursuant to resolution 69/292 on the development of a legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. We also look forward to the convening of an intergovernmental conference in 2018 to consider the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee on the

elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention.

Mr. Chairman

CARICOM will now offer a few comments on the subtopic, "ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law", which was chosen for discussion this year.

We are of the view that a proper understanding of international law is fundamental to promoting international peace and security, the friendly relations and cooperation among States, and advancing the rule of law at both the national and international levels.

To this end, CARICOM recognizes the significant contribution of the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law in fostering a better understanding and appreciation of international law through its regional law courses and seminars, law fellowship programmes, and the dissemination of legal publications and information through the internet and other electronic sources. However, we are also mindful that some of the activities under this important Programme were affected as a consequence of inadequate resources. We therefore urge all Member States, which are in a position to do so, to make voluntary contributions, with a view to ensuring the continued effectiveness and development of the Programme of Assistance.

Mr. Chairman

In closing, CARICOM reiterates its unequivocal commitment to promoting with rule of law at the national and international levels.