



AGENCY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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**Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties
that Establish Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) and Mongolia**

Statement by

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This is the third time in ten years that the NWFZ and Mongolia celebrate a Conference. It is appropriate to consider the value of this initiative and the fruits it is supposed to bear. A clear answer to this question implies a brief analysis of the objectives we are pursuing here.

The first objective of our Conference is to take advantage of our legitimacy as members of NWFZ in order to reclaim, with the strongest and loudest voice, a world free of nuclear weapons. Their very existence and, moreover, their deployment, their inclusion in strategic doctrines and policies, their possible use as instruments of political coercion, blatantly transgress International Law, including the UN Charter, and International Humanitarian Law and the covenants in defence of the environment.

That is why the NWFZ, as collective political entities, should develop an outward attitude and should not merely be considered as areas of retreat from the hard realities of nuclear weapons politics. NWFZ must continue to promote nuclear disarmament, for if deterrence fails and nuclear weapons are unleashed, no treaty will protect any NWFZ from the destruction of the Planet.

A second objective is to review the operation of the Treaties that created the Zones not only regarding their non-proliferation clauses but also other aspects like the development of the capability to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This review necessarily includes the recognition of our Treaties and respect of their letter and spirit by all States, beginning with the NWS. All the five Treaties were formally acknowledged and supported by the UN General Assembly. Protocols attached to the Treaties are an integral part of them. In this connection, declarations and interpretations that amount to reservations by States signatory and party to the Protocols are a contradiction that must be resolved by means of formal consultations beyond traditional appeals.

A third objective of our Conference is to favour the establishment of new NWFZ. We are here because we believe in the validity of the commitments and arrangements embodied in our five Treaties. Every new group of States that join the concept of NWFZ represents a progress towards the abolition of nuclear weapons and add to the political strength of the movement.

The international community as a whole has an interest in the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery

in the Middle East. We are aware that this endeavour must be pursued on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States within the region. However, in the experience of existing NWFZ there are elements that may be useful to the Middle East process. The 2010 NPT Review Conference, in its Final Document, foresaw that the IAEA, the OPCW and “other relevant international organizations” be consulted. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – OPANAL – was not approached on the subject in the last five years, but remains ready to contribute.

The fourth objective of this Conference is stated in the final paragraph of the Outcome Document of the Second Conference of this series, which reads as follows:

“We will continue to pursue international efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. In this regard, we intend to foster cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones to fully implement the principles and objectives of the treaties and to exchange relevant ideas and best practices in areas of mutual interest. To maintain continuity in the enhanced interaction among the nuclear-weapon-free zones generated at this Conference, we will explore, through diplomatic channels, the appropriate modalities for maintaining contact and disseminating relevant information among the nuclear-weapon-free zones during the inter-sessional period.”

As we are all aware, this cooperation has not been implemented yet.

We represent 116 States including Mongolia, we cover an enormous area with an immense population. We could take advantage of a more fluid and constant contact instead of limiting us to a gathering every five years.

A light and informal mechanism, without pre-conditions or fixed purposes, composed of a few representatives of every Zone meeting annually, for example, on the margins of the First Committee would certainly, in the view of OPANAL, have a healthy influence in the context of disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy.

Latin America and the Caribbean opted 48 years ago to create a permanent institution to oversee compliance with the Treaty of Tlatelolco and perform duties related to it in agreement with States Party. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – OPANAL – has been steadily performing its functions and is a focal point that enhances the active and harmonious participation of its member States in international efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

OPANAL is open to engaging with the other NWFZ in the ways each one deems appropriate in order to advance our common purposes.

OPANAL is also willing to increase its collaboration with civil society organizations, especially in initiatives related to education for peace and disarmament among other interests.