



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

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Statement *by*

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Delivered *by*

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Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - OPANAL

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Mr. President,

I convey to you the warmest congratulations from the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) on your election as President of the 60th Regular Session of this General Conference and wish you every success in this important function.

Mr. President,

The relationship between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the OPANAL stems from the inception of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was opened for signature on 14 February 1967.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco clearly establishes the basis for this inherent relationship in its Articles 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 29. As explained in Article 12 of the Treaty, the Control System was established “for the purpose of verifying:

- a. That devices, services and facilities intended for peaceful uses of nuclear energy are not used in the testing or manufacture of nuclear weapons,
- b. That none of the activities prohibited in Article I of this Treaty are carried out in the territory of the Contracting Parties with nuclear materials or weapons introduced from abroad [...]

The Control System of the Treaty therefore depends on the organic relationship between both our agencies.

Furthermore, Article 29 of the Treaty states that one of the requirements for the entry into force of the Treaty is the “Conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements on the application of the Safeguards System of the IAEA”. All the thirty-three Member States of OPANAL have safeguards agreements in force.

The role of the IAEA is essential for the fulfilment of the first obligation contained under Article 1 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco according to which: “The Contracting Parties hereby undertake to use exclusively for peaceful purposes the nuclear material and facilities which are under their jurisdiction [...]”. Thus, Article 1 starts by guaranteeing their inalienable right to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Mr. President,

Although it is not included in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in July this year, can also be considered part of the Control System as it established a unique and effective mechanism of “neighbours watching neighbours”.

Moreover, Article 19 of the Treaty foresees that OPANAL may conclude such agreements with the IAEA as authorized by the General Conference in order to facilitate the efficient operation of the System. On 3 October 1972, both agencies signed the “Cooperation Agreement between the IAEA and the OPANAL”, which entitles OPANAL to “be invited to the regular annual sessions of the General Conference of the IAEA” (Article II, Par. 2.), which allows me the honour of addressing you today.

Early this year, on 5 February, OPANAL Member States were honoured to receive the visit of Director-General Yukiya Amano at OPANAL Headquarters within the framework of a Special Session of the OPANAL Council. It was indeed an important opportunity to strengthen the ties of collaboration between our agencies.

This Cooperation Agreement has been a framework for the relation between both agencies permitting them to act in close cooperation with each other and to consult with a view of harmonizing their efforts.

Mr. President,

On 14 February 2017 we will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, one of the greatest contributions of Latin America and the Caribbean to international peace and security.

As part of the events for this occasion, the General Conference of OPANAL will meet at the ministerial level, on Tuesday, 14 February 2017 in Mexico City.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States Party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco will adopt a Declaration renewing the commitment of their countries to maintain the entire region free of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, a high level International Seminar will take place also in Mexico City on Monday, 13 February 2017.

The golden jubilee of the Treaty of Tlatelolco is certainly a cause for celebration not only for the Latin American and Caribbean Region, but also for all States that believe that humankind deserves a nuclear-weapon-free world.

I am pleased to note that, in addition to the functions stated in the Treaty, the OPANAL has expanded its activities in the last few years, working for the Region's increased participation in the international debate on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

For three consecutive years since 2014, OPANAL Member States have issued a Declaration on the International Day for the Total elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September. This has been an opportunity to reinforce the commitment of the Latin American and Caribbean Region to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the same vein, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) designated OPANAL as "the specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament".

Mr President,

OPANAL warmly welcomes the 60th Anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency and celebrates its mission and commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

Thank you, Mr President.