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**STATEMENT BY ECUADOR ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES -CELAC- IN THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**(70th Session, October 2015)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).
2. At the outset, we wish to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee for the 70th Session of the General Assembly as well as to the other members of the Bureau. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica for his tireless work as Chairman of this Committee during the previous Session.
3. Our region has a long-standing tradition of promoting disarmament, non proliferation and arms control. We consider them to be priority issues on the agenda of the United Nations, as well as essential components for the maintenance of international peace and security (2014 statement). At the same time, we reiterate our firm conviction and commitment to continue promoting full and verifiable nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority of the Community, and the urgent need to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons.
4. The Community proudly recalls the historic decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of CELAC gathered in Havana, Cuba, on the occasion of the II Summit of the Community, on 28 and 29 January 2014, to formally declare Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, and reaffirmed CELAC's unwavering commitment to resolve disputes through peaceful means with the aim of banishing forever the use and threat of use of force in our region and against individual countries. This decision was reiterated during the III Summit, held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

5. At the Founding Summit of CELAC in December 2011, held in Caracas, Venezuela, our Heads of State and Government adopted a Special Communiqué on the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, in accordance with the region's long-standing position supporting a world free of nuclear weapons. In each subsequent Summit, 2013 in Santiago, Chile, 2014 in Havana, Cuba, and 2015 in Belén, Costa Rica, the Heads of State and Government have reiterated, through Special Declarations, this same commitment to a nuclear weapons free world.
6. Today, CELAC reaffirms the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. In this context, we express our opposition to the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of these weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies.

7. We are committed to the commencement of a multilateral diplomatic process for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible, and verifiable manner and within a multilaterally agreed timeframe, as proposed at the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna in December 2014. This instrument is a necessary measure to achieve nuclear disarmament and would fulfill the obligation of all States Parties to the NPT as expressed in article VI of the Treaty. It is the intention of CELAC Member States to start exploring, during the current session of the Committee and with other willing States, practical and concrete ways by which this instrument can be negotiated and adopted as soon as possible.
8. Pending its adoption, CELAC Member States call for negotiation and adoption, as soon as possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. It is a legitimate interest of all non-Nuclear Weapon States, including all 33 CELAC Member States, to receive unequivocal and legally binding assurances by Nuclear Weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons.
9. While recalling the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, CELAC members reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of the Charter of the United Nations. The Community reiterates that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and prohibition.
10. CELAC Member States express our greatest concern at the humanitarian impact and global long-term consequences of any accidental or intended use of nuclear weapons. We believe this issue should be raised whenever nuclear weapons are discussed. We therefore commend the organization of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna for their deliberations and contributions to the global discourse in achieving a nuclear weapons free world. As demonstrated by the testimonies of survivors, evidence and scientific data, the existence of nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to security, the development of peoples and to civilization in general. Furthermore, it has been ascertained that no state or international organization has the capacity to successfully address and provide humanitarian assistance and protection in case of a nuclear detonation. These conferences also highlighted the ongoing risk of the detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or design.
11. We highlight that at the recent Community Summit, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the Austrian Pledge, now the Humanitarian Pledge. We welcome its endorsement by [117] States.
12. On the occasion of the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, we took pride once again in being the first densely populated area in the world declared as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ), through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). We wish to reiterate that the establishment of internationally recognized Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, strengthens international peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime, and constitutes an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament.
13. We urge the Nuclear-Weapons States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which constitute de facto reservations prohibited by the Treaty, and to respect the denuclearized character of Latin America and the Caribbean, thus helping to eliminate the possible use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

14. The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), the specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament, have been a political, legal, and institutional reference point in the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. OPANAL's experience is also an important legacy of the international community for inspiring the establishment of new Nuclear-Weapon-Free zones.
15. CELAC maintain our firm stance in favor of the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, non- proliferation, and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination or double standards. CELAC emphasizes the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT, and therefore urges States that have not yet done so to accede to this Treaty as Non-Nuclear States. The Community calls on Nuclear-Weapon States to comply with their commitments under Article VI of the Treaty, and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons, and we urge them to fully and immediately implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, which are extant and bind all States Parties. Their non implementation undermines the integrity and credibility of the Treaty.
16. Mr. Chairman, we must express our grave disappointment at the lack of consensus, at the recent Review Conference of the NPT which ultimately prevented the adoption of the draft outcome document. At the same time, the provisions on nuclear disarmament in the draft outcome document distributed in the final hours of the Conference did not satisfy the expectations of the Member States of CELAC. We viewed these provisions as a step back from the outcome documents of previous Review Conferences. The failure of this Review Conference should serve as further impetus for those of us who truly believe in the need for the early prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons to renew the efforts towards this objective.
17. At the same time, we reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference does not entail the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons.
18. CELAC regrets the failure to implement the agreement arrived at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold the International Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, CELAC is strongly convinced that the establishment of such a zone would be a significant step in the peace process in the Middle East region. In this regard, CELAC deeply regrets that no agreement was found on this issue at the 2015 NPT Review Conference and reminds all NPT States Parties that the creation of this zone is an essential component of the decisions that led to the indefinite extension of the NPT, in 1995, which should be fulfilled.
19. The Community reiterates the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and urges those States in Annex II of the Treaty whose ratification is essential for its entry into force to accelerate the process of signing and/or ratifying this instrument. Also calls upon all States to refrain from carrying out nuclear weapon test explosions, other nuclear explosions or any other non-explosive relevant experiment, including subcritical experiments, and those performed by supercomputers for the improvement of nuclear weapons. Such actions are contrary to the objective and purposes of the CTBT, as well as to the spirit of the Treaty, thereby undermining the desired impact as a nuclear disarmament measure. In this regard, CELAC welcomes the holding on the 29th of September of this year of

the Conference on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT, convened under article XIV of the Treaty.

20. The Community welcomes with appreciation the establishment of September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, highlight all events that took place around the world to observe this day, and call on the *United Nations, its Secretariat and agencies*, governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day. In this connection we welcome its commemoration by the General Assembly this year.
21. CELAC will strive to ensure proper follow-up to resolution A/RES/68/32 of the General Assembly entitled "Follow-Up to the 2013 High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament", and pledges to continue working towards the convening of a High Level Conference no later than 2018, to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible timeframe, with the aim of negotiating and ultimately adopting a treaty for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.
22. We note with appreciation the agreement reached on Iran's nuclear programme in Vienna, on 14 July 2015, between Iran and the P5+1. CELAC underlines that this Agreement showed once again that dialogue and negotiations are the only effective way to resolve differences among States.

Mr. Chairman,

23. CELAC is aware of the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their part and components and ammunition. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects deeply affects stability, exacerbates violence and insecurity, and undermines respect of international law, causing a large number of deaths each year and absorbing sizeable resources that could be used for development.
24. The Community reaffirms the crucial importance of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects (UNPoA), and recognizes its significant contribution to efforts carried out on this matter. We also stress the need for its full and effective implementation. CELAC underscores that the adoption of the outcome document of the Second Review Conference of the UNPoA in 2012, renewed the commitment by the international community to strengthen its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. CELAC reiterates the importance of the International Instrument to Enable States to Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.
25. CELAC emphasizes that work must continue at the multilateral level in the framework of the UNPoA, in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, advancing towards the adoption of legally-binding instruments on, marking and tracing, and illicit brokering, in order to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market. We take note of the outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of the UNPoA, held in June 2014, and of the second Open ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, in June of this year. We will continue actively participating in the current UNPoA cycle, including the Sixth Biennial Meeting which will take place in 2016.
26. The Community, in order to highlight the importance of regional and international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, agreed to establish a Working Group to study comprehensively this issue. This Working Group has the mandate to generate proposals for mechanisms and procedures that will

allow us to better coordinate our efforts, on the basis of full respect for international law and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, to strengthening the prevention and combat of illicit trade in this category of weapons, for the benefit of public safety and security.

27. CELAC expects that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding instrument on the arms trade, can contribute to provide an effective response to the serious consequences that the illicit and non-regulated trade in arms for many people and States, in particular through the diversion of arms to non-State actors or unauthorized users, often linked to transnational organized crime. We further hope that this Treaty can contribute to prevention of armed conflict, armed violence, and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
28. At the same time, in light of the entry into force of the Treaty in December 2014, we call for the treaty to be applied in a balanced, transparent and objective manner, respecting the sovereign right of all States to ensure their self-defense, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. We recognize the convening, at the end of August of this year in Cancún, Mexico, of the First Conference of States Parties (CSP1) of the Arms Trade Treaty and would like to highlight Mexico's leadership during the preparatory process and organization of that meeting.
29. The issue of anti-personnel mines continues to demand the attention of the international community. CELAC *recalls with appreciation* the Declaration of Central America as a mine-free zone. Likewise, CELAC recognizes the value of the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Our group stresses the importance of cooperation for humanitarian demining and assistance to victims and hopes that the successes achieved in recent years will continue. We also take note of the Declaration of Maputo+15 adopted at the Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in June 2014.
30. CELAC supports international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and by their use against civilian populations, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. It also recognizes and values the wish of any State to take multilaterally agreed actions regarding the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. Likewise, we recognize the *ratification by Colombia* of the Cluster Munitions Convention and the establishment of Central America as a cluster munitions free zone during the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in San José, Costa Rica, in September 2014. The Community takes note of the outcome of the First Review Conference of States Parties of this Convention, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in September of this year.
31. CELAC is convinced that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons play an important role in contributing to the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States and to the enhancement of stability and security, in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, abiding by their voluntary nature and the specific security concerns, and situations of States. It is worth recalling in this regard the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which were adopted by consensus. Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, which contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security. We therefore encourage Member States to strengthen, improve and extend the measures of confidence-building at all levels, as appropriate.
32. In this regard, the Community welcomes all transparency and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms already voluntarily undertaken by concerned States in their respective regions or sub-regions, as well as the information on such measures provided on a

voluntary basis to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. At the same time, in the light of new challenges faced by the international community in the areas of social and economic development, including the eradication of poverty, CELAC wishes to remind member States that resources used for military expenses could potentially be used to support economic and social development.

Mr. Chairman,

33. CELAC stresses its firm conviction that the complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons constitutes a priority in the field of disarmament and non proliferation. In this regard, CELAC emphasizes the importance of universal adherence by all States to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and to the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons, and the importance of full compliance by all State Parties to all its provisions and requirements.
34. CELAC affirms its most resolute rejection of the use of chemical weapons and any other weapon of mass destruction, regardless of where it is used and who uses it.
35. We welcome the recent accessions of Angola and Myanmar to the Convention on Chemical Weapons and we call upon those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible. At the same time we call on all possessor States Parties to ensure the complete destruction of their stockpiles of chemical weapons within the final agreed deadline.

Mr. Chairman,

36. CELAC Member States share a common interest in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space only for peaceful purposes for the benefit and interest of all States and as the province of all humankind irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development.
37. In the context of international security, CELAC recognizes the important opportunities provided by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including social media, as a vehicle to promote a better understanding among nations and the achievement of internationally agreed development objectives, and as a tool to promote the universal access to information.
38. At the same time, CELAC strongly condemns the actions of espionage and indiscriminate massive and global monitoring among countries by state and non-state actors, in violation of international law, and to any action of this nature directed against any Member State. The Community underscores the importance of safeguarding the use of cyberspace for peaceful purposes and in ensuring that the use of ICTs be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, in particular the sovereignty, the non-interference in internal matters of States, and the promotion and protection of all human rights for all.
39. In this regard, we favor the strengthening of international norms and principles applicable to States in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, by promoting actions and strategies to strengthen cyber-security and prevent cyber-crime and taking into consideration that open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful ICT environment is essential for all.

40. In closing, CELAC reaffirms the role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Community once again deeply regrets that the CD has not yet been able to agree on and implement its program of work. CELAC urges all members of the CD to show the political will in order to ensure the commencement without delay of its substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a balanced and comprehensive program of work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, including through negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on Negative Security Assurances to Non-Nuclear Weapon States, as well as on the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space and, on a non-discriminatory and multilateral Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that serves both non-proliferation and disarmament purposes.
41. The Community regrets that the Disarmament Commission has been unable to make recommendations in previous cycles. It is important for the Commission to fulfill its mandate as expressed by the First UN Special Session on Disarmament in order to advance our goals. CELAC reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with the members of the Commission in achieving concrete results during the current cycle. The Community calls on all delegations to show the necessary political will to enable this UN deliberative body to fulfill its mandate and formulate substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.
42. Furthermore, the Community would like to point out the important work undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), in providing assistance to the countries of the region for the implementation of disarmament measures in various areas.

Thank you.