

## STATEMENT

**By H. E. Sandra Grant-Griffiths, Ambassador of Jamaica to Mexico at the Commemorative Event for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco during the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of OPANAL  
Mexico City, Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

### SALUTATIONS

Senor Presidente, Chancellor Morales Moscoso of Guatemala

Secretary General, Ambassador Luiz Macedo Soares

Distinguished Ministers, and Delegates

Excellencies, and other Specially Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Government of Jamaica, it is my honour to address the XXV Session of the General Conference of OPANAL on the occasion of the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary General and the Government of Mexico for hosting a fitting commemorative event to mark this golden jubilee anniversary. This milestone celebration provides the Member States of OPANAL a signal opportunity to not only reflect on the unique role played by our region in the global peace and security framework, but also to chart the way forward.

Fifty years in the life of any institution is significant, as it demonstrates the enduring commitment of its constituents to the principles and goals, which bind them together. As a region, the member states of Latin America and the Caribbean can be justifiably proud of its contribution to realizing global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals given our distinction as the first nuclear weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, which

importantly, has facilitated the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones in other parts of the world.

It is therefore fitting that we pause to acknowledge the visionary architects of the Treaty, namely the late Mexican diplomats - led by Alfonso García Robles – whose relentless efforts and dedication to the cause of disarmament, gave birth to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Treaty remains one of the most important contributions to enhancing international peace and security, and paved the way for the adoption of other agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Jamaica continues to advocate for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and maintains a keen interest in advancing the goal of general and complete disarmament. As a Small Island Developing State, Jamaica cannot contemplate the prospect of a nuclear detonation that would devastate the entire world, regardless of the region where it takes place, and affect the lives of current and future generations. We remain deeply concerned about the likely humanitarian impact and long-term consequences on public health, food security and the environment. It is against this background that Jamaica strongly supported, from the inception, the *“Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons”* initiative at the United Nations, which has been championed by member states of CELAC and other countries.

We remain deeply concerned over the limited progress achieved to date in addressing nuclear disarmament, owing largely to the reluctance of nuclear weapons states to fulfil their obligation. In recent times, the dynamics of the global security environment have radically changed, presenting a higher risk of nuclear materials falling into the hands of non-state actors. According to the old adage, *“evil persists when good people fail to act”*. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean must therefore urge greater political will among nuclear weapon states towards nuclear disarmament.

Jamaica fully supported the work of the ***Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations*** last year and welcomes the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 71/258 in December 2016, paving the way for the convening of a UN Conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

As this may very well become a defining moment in the nuclear disarmament agenda, we, the Member States of OPANAL, must continue to work constructively to ensure that a solid foundation is laid for a successful conference.

As a firm advocate for the peaceful uses of energy, Jamaica also looks forward to increased cooperation between OPANAL and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for sustainable development.

Senor Presidente,

The Latin America and Caribbean region played a vital role in building on the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime and must continue to urge universal compliance with obligations under the NPT. In the spirit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and as we commemorate this auspicious occasion, the region must once again play an integral role in negotiations towards a nuclear weapon-free world. This is imperative if we are to succeed in safeguarding current and future generations from the devastating and irreversible consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

It remains for me to extend congratulations to Ambassador Soares on the renewal of his tenure as Secretary General in 2018. We look forward to working with you to ensure the progress of the region. I thank you.