



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

---

SECRETARIAT

S/Inf.1080Eng

**Commemoration of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the  
Treaty of Tlatelolco**

*Opening address by*

**Amb. Gioconda Ubeda Rivera**

Secretary General

OPANAL

Mexico City  
14 February 2012

Honourable members of the Presidium,

H.E. Enrique Castillo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica;

H.E. Luis Leonardo Almagro Lemes, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uruguay;

Mr. Yukiya Amano, IAEA Director-General;

Ambassador Sergio Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs;

Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo, Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico;

Ambassador Emeritus, H.E. Sergio González Gálvez, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico;

Mr. Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization;

I would also like to welcome the Vice Ministers of Cuba, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador; special representatives of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of OPANAL Member States, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps; representatives of International Organizations, distinguished guests and participants to the International Seminar "The Experience of the NWFZ of Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond."

I am delighted to welcome you to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in this very room, named after Ambassador Emeritus Alfonso García Robles. Thirty years ago, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership and efforts that conduct to the adoption and signing of this Treaty and to the creation of the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the World, established in a highly populated area. We honour his memory through this event.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Mexico for being the auspicious of this Commemoration, but above all, for the exercised leadership in the negotiations and signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco; as well as in subsequent years. It is no accident that this generous country is entrusted with such multilateral instrument and, at the same time, hosts the Agency that ensures compliance with it.

Half a century ago, our region and planet were closer to experiencing a nuclear war in Latin American territory. In 1963, one year after this incident, the Presidents of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico announced through a Declaration that their governments were willing to sign a

multilateral agreement in order for the region to be recognized, as soon as possible, as a denuclearized zone. In this Declaration, they called upon all other regional leaders to join this cause. The response was immediate. In 1964, negotiations started and three years later, in 1967, 21 States signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco, at the time when the region was formed by 22 States.

Meanwhile, Nuclear-Weapon States also started the signing process of the Additional Protocols to the Treaty. I refer to the five permanent members of the Security Council and with respect to territories administered by Nuclear Powers; the Netherlands is a signatory State to the Additional Protocol I.

This is the legacy that we commemorate today, the legacy in favour of regional and global peace and security; that had not only a momentary vision of the geopolitical context of the Cold War, but above all, it brought together the future vision while establishing in the preamble of the Treaty that NWFZs are a means not an end in themselves to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. This belief, this difficult utopia to achieve, but not impossible, is a belief that runs through the veins of Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, apart from further strengthening the Zone, OPANAL Member States are committed to join forces towards achieving this final purpose.

45 year after this collective decision, relevant events have passed, the Cold War ended at the end of the 80s; nevertheless, this did not mean the end of the nuclear arm race, as it was expected; therefore, the menace is there since 1945. In contrast to this, more States became Parties and Signatories to Treaties establishing NWFZs in the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia. A total of five Zones formed by 114 States and Mongolia, all sharing the aspiration to achieve a world without nuclear-weapon. Here lies the importance of NWFZs working together in order to move towards this aspiration with a joint leadership, needing effective coordination among them.

The Preparatory Committee for the IX NPT Review Conference to be held in Vienna this year, will be an opportunity to move ahead in this regard. We hope that this Seminar starting in the afternoon will also contribute to this purpose.

Regarding OPANAL, 2011 has been a very relevant year in the strengthening process of its political agenda towards the Zone's consolidation and concerning its commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Back in June, we participated for the very first time in the Conference on Disarmament, sharing in a formal session the future vision of the Agency and our interest in promoting an informal dialogue

with this forum, the only body specialize in dealing with disarmament issues in the international community.

At the First Committee of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, we presented the Declaration of 21 items approved in September 2011 by all 33 Member States; Declaration in which they commit themselves, inter alia, to support the UN Secretary General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament. Particularly, they express their convictions in joining forces to achieve a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at banning nuclear weapons.

In November, we attended the Forum, convened by the IAEA Director-General Mr. Yukiya Amano, to share the experience of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean that could be of possible interest for the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East, a region suffering from well known conflicts, like the 1962 missile crisis.

Regarding IAEA and ABACC, we built institutional approaches to strengthen cooperation, especially in a reorganized and significant agenda on the Control and Verification System of Peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Concerning common challenges, we still have a long way to go.

We are aiming to be the first NWFZ in the world to become part of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), last December we move a step forward with the ratification of Guatemala to this Treaty, we will reach this goal with the ratification of two more States.

Also in 2011, we continue our talks with the United States and the Russian Federation, for the purpose of considering the withdrawal or adaptation of the Interpretative Declarations that restrict the military denuclearization statute of the Zone, made at the time of signing and/or ratification of the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We welcome the presence of distinguished representatives from such countries as their will to continue moving forward with these talks.

Finally, in the first half of 2011, the council of OPANAL agreed to hold an International Seminar as part of this Commemoration in order to share visions, generate an enriching debate and find convergence in this rather complex scenario of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. More than 30 countries are present here today, together with high representatives from International Organizations, representatives from Signatory States to Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, representatives from other NWFZs, International NGOs, academic staff and experts. I would like to thank you for your willingness to attend today's call, call convened by our region; the most important reason for us to be here today is the steps we take towards the utopia we share.

2012 is the time to renew our commitment as Member States to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to continue preserving the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in order to strengthen the nuclear weapons Non-Proliferation regime and to enhance concrete and effective measures that can lead us to the place we wish for, the place we can build together: A world without nuclear weapons; the final purpose and reason for existence of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Thank you.