



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

SECRETARIAT

S/Inf.1086Eng
UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

**Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Signing of the
Treaty of Tlatelolco**

Address by

Dr. Enrique Castillo
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica

Mexico City
14 February 2012

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

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

Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, OPANAL Secretary General;

Dr. Carlos Arámburo de la Hoz, Research Coordinator of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM);

I would like to thank the Mexican Government for their warm welcome at this venue permeated with the memory of the man who led the four-year negotiations which later gave way, on 14 February 1967, to the Treaty of Tlatelolco; Eminent Ambassador and Nobel Peace Prize winner, H.E. Alfonso García Robles, who deserves the honour of having this auditorium named after him. Fifty years later, the cause that he and other great visionaries directed and encouraged is more relevant than ever. Since countries, like the one I am honoured to represent, have made disarmament a hub for their foreign policy.

I would like to extend a warm greeting to the Secretary General, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, and the Council, for organizing this solemn commemorative event and seminar, leaving a legacy for future generations; thereby honouring those who had the vision, in 1963, to free our region from nuclear weapons and eradicate the war threat of such magnitude in this part of the world.

Nuclear disarmament was and still is the *raison d'être* of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. That is what the 1967 great pioneers negotiated, agreed and signed; giving the world one of the most relevant political legacies of the region and one of the clearest and most important contributions to regional and global peace and security.

Forty-five years have been sufficient time for reflection, 2012 is a watershed year for the vision and actions for the future to take the same path: to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and move irreversibly towards a world in which nuclear weapons do not exist.

In this respect, I would like to highlight that the Declaration approved in September 2011 by OPANAL Member States, for the purpose of making it known to all States at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly, is an important document which contains the consensual political will of Latin America and the Caribbean, in the three areas of OPANAL political agenda. Firstly, I refer to actions aimed at improving the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ), in which dynamic participation from Member States to the Treaty of Tlatelolco is crucial; secondly, to the coordination and cooperation with other NWFZs, where it is necessary to identify effective working mechanisms on common issues; lastly, to the contribution to global efforts to create a world without nuclear weapons.

The last element underscores the "...conviction about the importance of starting the negotiations for a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at banning nuclear weapons..." The 33 States are committed to joining forces to achieve this primary goal.

This position in favour of nuclear disarmament continues to be one of the pillars of Costa Rica Foreign Policy. Consequently, in 1997 Malaysia and Costa Rica presented the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, with a draft of a Model Nuclear Weapon Convention, that later was debated at the UN General Assembly. This initiative was revised in 2007 and later revisited generically by the current UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his Five-Point Proposal on nuclear disarmament.

Now is the propitious time to start the deliberative process of this instrument, in which the political will of OPANAL Member States has been clearly expressed.

In my capacity as President of the Council, I would like to thank you all, representatives of Regional Governments, representatives of Signatory States to Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, high authorities of International Organizations, representatives of States Parties to other NWFZs, members of international NGOs and academic staff, for accepting the invitation to join us in commemorating this day, an opportunity for reflection and, as far as possible, an opportunity to identify measures in favour of the highest aspiration of mankind since 1945, when the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons was revealed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki .

Thank you.