



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

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**NEW YORK TRIP REPORT by OPANAL SECRETARY-GENERAL
8 - 15 OCTOBER 2012**

From 8 to 15 October, OPANAL Secretary-General attended the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly First Committee. During that week, she held several bilateral meetings; including a meeting with the Chairman of the First Committee.

Ambassador Ubeda also met with Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General; they discussed themes of interest to OPANAL and to the creation process of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East. She also held a meeting with Ms. Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who was appointed early this year. As usual, the Secretary-General met with Representatives of OPANAL Member States (GRULAC); with Representatives of Member States to other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs), New Zealand and Kazakhstan; and with Representatives of non-governmental organizations whose work area is nuclear disarmament. It was also an opportunity to talk to OPANAL Work Coordination Office in New York (led by Peru during the fourth quarter of 2012) and to the Community of Caribbean States (led by Antigua and Barbuda).

UN High Representative, Ms. Angela Kane, invited Ambassador Ubeda to deliver a lesson to “fellows” of the UN Programme of Fellowship on Disarmament, a group composed of MFA officials and government officials from 25 countries around the world. This was an excellent opportunity to promote OPANAL's work and highlight the importance of NWFZs.

In general, all six working days were well used for strengthening OPANAL relations with the aforementioned bodies, to address various items on the Agency's agenda and to show its vision towards 2015 and beyond, as described in this report.

I. 67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - FIRST COMMITTEE

From 8 to 15 October, OPANAL Secretary-General attended the 67th Session of the UNGA First Committee, in her capacity as Observer. On the last day, during the First Committee General Debate, Ambassador Ubeda took the floor to present her remarks (Doc. S/Inf.1102), in which she stressed the revitalization process of OPANAL and the progress made over the last 12 months. She also mentioned important items on the Agency's agenda, including Education, consolidation of the NWFZ, cooperation and coordination with other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and the Agency's participation in the international agenda regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Secretary-General reaffirmed OPANAL's willingness to support, as appropriate, the efforts towards the establishment of a Weapons of Mass destruction Free Zone in the Middle East, the III Conference of States Parties and Signatories to NWFZ Treaties to be held in 2015, and the IX NPT Review Conference to be held in the same year. She especially highlighted the new regional consensus, stressing "the determination of the 33 States to join the efforts of the international community to move forward towards negotiating a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons. Today, this consensus is a guideline for the Agency's agenda, as well as the strengthening of non-proliferation measures. Both Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation are inseparable from OPANAL's work".

Within the framework of the 67th Session of the First Committee, OPANAL Secretary-General had the opportunity to speak with representatives from various countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

II. MEETING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

On October 11, Ambassador Ubeda had a meeting with Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General. They shared views on the creation process of a Weapons of Mass Destruction-Free Zone in the Middle East. The UN Secretary-General showed special interest in knowing the opinion of Ambassador Ubeda about this process, and in the possible support that the experience of Latin American and Caribbean States could give to this process. OPANAL Secretary-General shared some relevant elements in the negotiation, establishment and consolidation process of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean, she also reaffirmed the commitment to supporting the aforementioned Middle East process, highlighting that one of the lessons to be considered is that

these processes are long and complex. It took 35 years for the 33 Latin American and Caribbean States to fully integrate the Zone, and still, challenges remain. OPANAL Secretary-General also mentioned political will, dialogue, transparency, leadership and flexibility in the negotiations as trust-building elements important for establishing a relationship between the parties involved; *a sine qua non* condition to reach agreements. Mr. Ban Ki-moon noted the importance of having OPANAL experience in facing this challenge; they committed themselves to maintaining communication on this matter.

Moreover, the UN Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean for serving as a reference for creating other NWFZs; he also recalled his official visit to Mexico and his participation in a Special Session of OPANAL Council. He mentioned that this was a very moving experience as it had been 40 years since the last time a UN Secretary-General visited OPANAL, making reference to his predecessor, U Thant, when he attended the First Session of OPANAL's General Conference, which took place in Mexico City on 2 September 1969.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon thanked Ambassador Ubeda for OPANAL efforts to reactivate the nuclear disarmament agenda and to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. In this regard, he stressed the importance of the Joint Declaration of the 33 States that OPANAL presented to UN Member States at the 66th Session of UNGA First Committee (2011).

To conclude, they talked about the importance of Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, and discussed OPANAL's educational programmes and projects, a subject in which both organizations have common interests.

III. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

On October 9, Ambassador Ubeda met with Ms. Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who was appointed early this year. Ms. Kane expressed her interest in the creation and consolidation process of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ambassador Ubeda extensively described this process, covering from the negotiation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to the revitalization process that has been developed over the last three years. She also described the challenges faced during the entire process and stressed that the systematization of regional lessons learnt and good practices is in progress, being an important historical legacy to the very Zone and to

the creation processes of new NWFZs. They addressed items on OPANAL's agenda and expressed their interest in creating a joint leadership with other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and in cooperating with prospective NWFZs, as in the case of the Middle East. Ambassador Ubeda reiterated the importance of seeing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as part of an indivisible whole.

The UN High Representative expressed a lot of interest in learning more about the long and complex consolidation process of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, Ambassador Ubeda made reference to the Joint Declaration adopted by OPANAL Member States in September 2011, she stressed that it was made by consensus and that in such document the 33 States express their commitment to joining forces with the international community to move forward towards negotiating a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons; in accordance with the UN Secretary-General five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament. Ambassador Ubeda noted that this is a major breakthrough for the Agency as it sets the Agency's agenda with a vision for the future. The UN High Representative asked about the steps that should be taken now, based on such vision for the future, and how such vision could be promoted. Ambassador Ubeda noted that the Joint Declaration is a small step that shows commitment and political will, she also said that it is now time to work together, the 33 Member States, other States that promote the same objective, international organizations and civil society, to find the best way to keep making progress.

The UN High Representative noted that sometimes it can be more difficult to work for the establishment of new NWFZs than for other more specific nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation topics; including education or the very legally-binding instrument, she thereby expressed her support to activities currently undertaken by OPANAL, particularly those related to the UN Secretary-General five point proposal. She also said that perhaps this is not easy either, especially because nowadays there are no commitments to nuclear disarmament; however, it is necessary to consider other routes, although they might be long. Ambassador Ubeda and Ms. Kane agreed on the fact that a good way to address nuclear disarmament would be to proceed in parallel towards disarmament and development. Ms. Kane highlighted that it would be a convincing argument to point out to States how many resources would be saved if they had no nuclear weapons. Ambassador Ubeda agreed on that and noted that it was also important to address the issue regarding the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, from the perspective of humanitarian consequences and from the violation of international law.

To conclude, they talked about the importance of Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, and discussed the projects that OPANAL is currently developing; they stressed the importance of reaching out to young people and making them aware of the threat posed by nuclear weapons; they also agreed on the importance of working with Civil Society. Ambassador Ubeda and Ms. Kane agreed to continue joining forces, between OPANAL and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, to move forward towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

IV. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF FELLOWSHIP ON DISARMAMENT

Within the framework of the previous meeting, Ambassador Ubeda was invited by the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to deliver a lesson to the participants of the UN Programme of Fellowship on Disarmament, representing more than 25 countries from all over the world. The UN General Assembly started this programme in 1978; it has trained over 500 officials from around 150 countries, many of whom now are performing public functions related to disarmament, mainly at Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

OPANAL Secretary-General delivered this course on October 10, she started from the concept and practice of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones; she stressed that the context and junction, in which these Zones were created, determines the contents of the Treaties. The Secretary-General highlighted that the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean is the world's first NWFZ reference. She described some current items on OPANAL's Agenda and its challenges. At the end of the session there was a question and answer period; the participants were very interested in learning about the challenges that Latin America and the Caribbean had to face over the long consolidation process of the Zone. Ambassador Ubeda concluded by reiterating to the participants the importance of the work that they could do, from their Ministries of Foreign Affairs, from the governments of their countries, in favour of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, she also reiterated that it is important that young people raise awareness about the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

V. MEETING WITH THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

On October 9, the Secretary-General had a meeting with the Caribbean States thanks to the support of the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda, current OPANAL Work Coordinator to CARICOM in New York. The meeting was attended by Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Saint Lucia, Guyana, Surinam and Jamaica; Mr. O'Neill Hamilton, CARICOM Special Representative for Non-proliferation affairs and for UN Security Council Resolution 1540, also attended the meeting.

Ambassador Ubeda thanked Ms. Gillian Joseph, First Secretary of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN, New York, for the activities that she now performs as OPANAL Work Coordinator to CARICOM and for convening the meeting with the Caribbean States. Ambassador Ubeda also thanked Mr. O'Neill Hamilton for his support during the meeting and for the attention he has given to strengthening the participation of CARICOM in OPANAL's work. Ambassador Ubeda also thanked all attendees and highlighted the attention she has given, in her capacity as OPANAL Secretary-General, to the participation and involvement of Caribbean States in OPANAL's work. She noted that when she first assumed this position, the relationship with CARICOM was limited to the three countries with an Official Representation in Mexico (Belize, Haiti and Jamaica). The Secretary-General shared the activities that have been undertaken over the last three years in order to bring CARICOM States closer; including the almost immediate translation of the Agency's relevant documents, an online course delivered in English, the translation of the documentary "Say No to Nuclear Weapons", and direct communications with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and their Offices. The establishment of a Work Coordination Office to CARICOM in New York is certainly part of this strategy.

The Secretary-General noted that all these efforts are aimed at increasing CARICOM participation in OPANAL's work, especially at increasing their sense of belonging to the Agency. Attendees were given a document showing CARICOM States' status of compliance with obligations under the Treaty of Tlatelolco (Articles 14 and 24), also showing the signature and ratification of the Amendments, the signature and ratification of the Convention on Prerogatives and Immunities of the Agency, and the payment of their contributions. The Secretary-General described the document and highlighted improvements made by Member States in different aspects; she made special emphasis in those cases in which States have met their obligations for the first time since they became Parties to the Treaty; Saint Christopher and Nevis, for example, Member State that ratified the three Amendments in 2012 and paid all its arrears since it fully incorporated to the Zone. The

Secretary-General reiterated the importance of compliance with obligations. To conclude, she gave an overview of OPANAL's activities and current agenda within the framework of its revitalization process and the international context.

CARICOM Member States Representatives showed a lot of interest in the information provided, especially in the status of compliance with obligations of their own countries. Some doubts were expressed about how to promote these subjects in their Ministries of Foreign Affairs in order to meet their obligations as soon as possible. They reaffirmed their commitment to OPANAL to promote and monitor this subject in their capital cities. All Representatives attending the meeting thanked the Secretary-General for the efforts to achieve a closer relationship with Caribbean States, something that had never been done before and that they hope to reciprocate.

The Secretary-General reaffirmed the support of the Secretariat-General to answer any question or concern; she encouraged Member States Representatives to develop a more direct communication to facilitate their participation and to make possible for their countries to comply with their obligations.

Mr. Hamilton reaffirmed his commitment to the subject and expressed that he will reiterate, at all non-proliferation forums in which he takes part, the importance of dynamic participation of CARICOM States in OPANAL's work, as well as the importance of compliance with their obligations. He expressed that he is aware that lack of compliance with obligations is not deliberate; sometimes States do not know the status of compliance or are unaware of the obligations that they must meet. These meetings are therefore very important, as so is the dissemination of this message in all possible forums.

VI. MEETING WITH THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES (GRULAC)

On October 15, with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Peru, in its capacity as OPANAL Work Office Coordinator in New York for the fourth quarter of 2012, Ambassador Ubeda met with Representatives of the Missions of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) to inform them about the most relevant items on OPANAL's agenda; meeting that has become customary in the last four visits of the Secretary-General to New York, from 2010 to 2012. Representatives from 15 Latin American States, including some Ambassadors,

attended the meeting that was held at the Peru Mission (Caribbean States were summoned separately). The session was opened by Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, who served as OPANAL Secretary-General from 1994 to 2001. Ambassador Ubeda described the progress made by the Agency over the last year and reported about the Commemorative Event of the 45th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the International Seminar: “The Experience of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond.” The Secretary-General also reported about the work that is currently undertaken by the Secretariat-General, including the analysis of the Control System in order to propose measures to strengthen it, and an Education project to develop an Agency’s own course on Nuclear-Disarmament and Non-proliferation.

VII. APPROACHING OTHER NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONES

1. New Zealand

On October 10, Ambassador Ubeda met with Ambassador Dell Higgie, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the Conference on Disarmament, pursuant to talks that began in 2011, in New York. They exchanged views on the 2015 Conference of States Parties and Signatories to NWFZ Treaties, they shared the thought that NWFZs must work together in order for the Conference’s results to go beyond the Final Documents of the first two Conferences. They concurred that, although little progress has been made, it is important to keep moving forward. Ambassador Ubeda reaffirmed OPANAL commitment to Indonesia, Coordinator of the 2015 Conference of NWFZs, for a successful event. She stressed the importance to establish a joint leadership, especially towards the next NPT Review Conference. They agreed to prepare a set of ideas on concrete topics to be presented at the next Preparatory Meeting of the 2015 Conference of NWFZs to be held in Geneva. Ambassador Ubeda would send the first set of ideas by the end of this year or early 2013, to start informal consultations. They agreed to maintain constant communication in order to strengthen communication and cooperation between NWFZs and towards the 2015 Conference of NWFZs.

2. Kazakhstan

On October 12, the Secretary-General met with Ambassador Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations. Ambassador Ubeda reiterated her gratitude to Ambassador Aitimova for attending the International Seminar “The Experience of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond” held on 14-15 February 2012. Ambassador Aitimova expressed that this event was highly relevant and very interesting because of the content of the presentations and high level participants.

The Secretary-General talked about her recent trip to Kazakhstan to participate in Astana International Conference, which took place on 28-29 August. She also reiterated the importance of promoting a joint leadership between Zones, especially regarding the preparations for the 2015 Conference of States Parties and Signatories to NWFZ Treaties and Mongolia. They exchanged views on the initiative discussed with New Zealand in the previous paragraph; Ambassador Aitimova expressed her interest in joining forces in this informal consultations.

VIII. MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

On October 9, Ambassador Ubeda met with Dr. Robert Zuber, Director of Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict; and also met with Mr. Alyn Ware, from Parliamentarians for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). Ambassador Ubeda has maintained a constant dialogue with both representatives to identify actions for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

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