



**Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
in Latin America and the Caribbean**



Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in
Latin America and the Caribbean

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**Third Session of the Preparatory Committee of the
IX Review Conference of the States Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Statement by

The Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL)

Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares

United Nations, New York

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Señor Presidente,

Es para mí, en calidad de Secretario General del Organismo para la Proscripción de las Armas Nucleares en la América Latina y el Caribe, una feliz circunstancia participar en esta reunión del Comité Preparatorio bajo la conducción de un ilustre diplomático peruano quien ejerció hace algunos años con distinción las funciones que ahora me caben.

Mr Chairman,

In taking part in this debate, my purpose is to bring a specific contribution from the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean to the preparation of next year's NPT Review Conference. All the 33 Member States of the Agency are parties to the NPT and are making their own contributions on the whole range of subjects to be covered by the Conference.

The Agency itself, known by the acronym OPANAL, has its proper mandate given by its governing bodies. At this point, it is worthwhile reminding that OPANAL is a full-fledged international organization with a thorough legal personality in terms of International Law. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone of Latin America and the Caribbean, established OPANAL vested with the necessary functions to enforce its dispositions.

Consequently, in a few words, the Agency has to ensure that States Parties are fulfilling their obligations, the most important of which is to keep the Zone of Application of the Treaty free of nuclear weapons. Secondly, OPANAL shall advance in every fora and in all other regions the goal of nuclear disarmament which is, in fact, the ultimate aim of the Treaty. Let me stress that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is a proper legal instrument, product of the political will of its States Parties. It is not a declaration of principles or an exhortation to good conduct.

Mr Chairman,

The latest General Conference of OPANAL, that took place in Buenos Aires last year, adopted an agenda for action of which I highlight three elements. First: “to join forces with the international community to move forward towards the negotiation of a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at banning nuclear weapons”. Second: to urge States signatories of the Protocols to the Treaty to modify or withdraw interpretative declarations made when signing and ratifying those instruments. This objective is clearly stated in action 9 in the Final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Third: to promote concrete actions with other Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones, States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Regarding this third element, I mention the special relevance of the linkage established with OPANAL by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, known by the acronym CELAC, in its II Summit held in Havana, Cuba, last January. The Heads of State and Government both in their Declaration and in the Special Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament reserved a special place for OPANAL. The political significance of this means that the specialized Agency - OPANAL - is formally acknowledged and gains an enhanced authority from the political organism - CELAC - with identical membership.

I lastly refer to the coordination and cooperation with the four other Zones free of Nuclear Weapons and Mongolia. The potential of this movement has not yet been sufficiently exploited. OPANAL and its Secretariat are prepared and keen to work together with Indonesia, that is leading the preparation of the third Conference of the Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones and Mongolia to meet next year.

That Conference will build upon the declarations adopted in 2005 in Mexico and in 2010 in New York.

Four issues could concentrate the attention of next year’s Conference. The first is the reinforcement of the Zones, for which it is essential to exchange information among them about their peculiar situations and problems they face.

The second concerns the question of negative security assurances which are crucial for the Zones. Their Member States have assumed legally-binding assurances vis-à-vis all

the other States including the nuclear-weapon States. It is morally, politically and legally indispensable that a reciprocal undertaking under the form of a treaty is accepted by the nuclear-weapon States.

A third and urgent issue is the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and the other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. No one can ignore the obstacles that the States in the region face to achieve this goal universally desired. Let's not use the obstacles as an excuse not to make progress in that direction.

When, some 50 years ago, Latin American and Caribbean countries started the negotiation of what came to be the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the political conditions and the strategic situation in our region, including the incidence in it of the cold war competing superpowers, could not be more adverse to such an endeavor. In a large part of the region the prevailing political regimes and the low level of confidence among many States were not conducive to a strategic understanding among them. In spite of all these odds, the Treaty was concluded and a territory larger than 20 million square kilometers with a population of 600 million is preserved from nuclear weapons.

OPANAL, with 47 years of experience and an unmatched record in non-proliferation is ready to bring its contribution to this preparatory meeting and to the Review Conference next year.

Thank you.