



General Conference

XXVII Session
30 September 2021
Agenda Item 6

Original: Spanish

Courtesy translation

STATEMENT OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

I would like to thank the Secretary General, Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini, and the team of the Secretariat of OPANAL, as well as the members of the Council, for their intense work throughout this year and 2020.

Despite the difficulties brought by the pandemic, the Agency was able to continue active and able to adapt to the new conditions, which made it possible for us to have this virtual Conference today.

Today we meet again in a context that presents new challenges on sociosanitary and economic matters, which have been added to the existing ones, like a world where nuclear weapons still persist. This demands greater efforts from us in order to move towards a safer world.

General and complete disarmament, internationally verifiable and that guarantees its irreversibility is a challenge that, in order to be effective, the international community should address constructively and on the basis of broad consensus.

Argentina, out of conviction and due to its position as a country that produces and consumes energy and nuclear materials has a special responsibility, it is a country firmly committed to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation

Within this framework, our country maintains a vigorous nuclear program for exclusively peaceful purposes with the strictest respect for the provisions enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the standards of existing initiatives in the matter.

For Argentina, the NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The next Review Conference of the Treaty, chaired by Argentina, will

be an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the States Parties with the obligations and rights enshrined in the Treaty.

As is known, my country signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 27 September 1967 and ratified it on 18 January 1994. Since that first date, the commitment of Argentina to disarmament and non-proliferation has been unwavering and that is why Argentina has been actively participating in OPANAL throughout these years.

I wish to highlight, in this regard, the path that we have been building and consolidating alongside Brazil for 30 years based on cooperation and mutual confidence building within the region. 30 years ago, both countries renounced to the development, production, acquisition and use of nuclear weapons, thereby enabling us to advance towards a Latin America and the Caribbean as the first densely populated area of the planet free of nuclear weapons.

The ABACC represents much more than a binational safeguards institution. It is a paradigm of integration and confidence building between countries that have gone through times of tension and we are honored that the Agency has been presented more than once as an inspiration for other regions of the world.

Argentina permanently maintains a position of clear support for the establishment and consolidation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, in the understanding that they constitute important contributions to peace and security for the States that are part of them. In that regard, the contribution of the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been real and effective, since it strengthened our regional commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament and managed, through its system of Protocols, to bind the countries that possess nuclear weapons so that they do not violate the status of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of our region. Those commitments must be honored and strengthened.

Much remains to be done in order to achieve effective compliance with the obligations set out in the Treaty. Therefore, we must continue working so that the interpretative declarations to the Protocols are withdrawn or revised, in accordance with the text of the instrument.

In this regard, we highlight the effort that the Secretariat has been making to advance on this issue and we acknowledged the work of the Technical Group on the Interpretative Declarations to Protocols I and II, which Argentina has had the honor coordinate.

As is known, part of the Argentine national territory, specifically the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia, South Sandwich and the surrounding maritime spaces, are illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and therefore the Argentine Republic is in fact prevented from accessing said portion of its territory.

Furthermore, the effective implementation of the Treaty is also challenged by the prolonged and unjustified military presence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the South Atlantic, which includes the displacement of nuclear submarines capable of carrying nuclear weapons in the Denuclearized Zone established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

This situation contradicts the resolution 31/49 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which urges the two parties to refrain from adopting decisions that entail the introduction of unilateral changes in the situation while the Islands are going through the negotiation process recommended by the relevant resolutions. Furthermore, it contradicts the resolution 41/11 of the General Assembly (Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic) which, among other provisions, urges the States of all other regions, especially the military important States, to scrupulously respect the South Atlantic region as a zone of peace and cooperation, in particular by reducing and eventually eliminating their military presence in that region.

Finally, it recalls the interpretative declaration made at the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and requests the cooperation of the Agency to ensure that activities that violate the Treaty are not carried out in the area of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia, South Sandwich and the surrounding maritime spaces.

In recent times we have verified that the challenges we face, be they in sociosanitary, environmental or security matters, must be addressed through collective solutions. Advancing towards a world free of nuclear weapons will only be achieved when the political will of all the States that make up the international community is counted on, and for this the work of OPANAL is essential.

Thank you very much.