



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

## **General Conference**

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*Courtesy translation*

### **Speech of the Kazakhstan Delegation to the XXVII Ordinary Session of OPANAL- General Conference September 30, 2021**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Dear Ambassadors, participants of the Conference!

Ladies and gentlemen!

Thank you for giving me the floor. It is a great honor to address you.

First of all, I would like to thank you for the invitation to the twenty-seventh Session of the General Conference of OPANAL addressed to the Embassy of Kazakhstan in its capacity as an observer of this organization.

As you all know, Kazakhstan and its nation suffered nuclear tests, perhaps more than any other country and people in the world. On the territory of Kazakhstan, at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, the area of which was 300 thousand square kilometers, from 1949 to 1989 many nuclear tests were carried out. 40 years of continuous testing of nuclear weapons caused enormous damage to our land and the health of the nation. A total of 468 nuclear and thermonuclear explosions were carried out.

As a result of these tests, a million and a half people were affected on Kazakh land and a huge territory that exceeded the size of various countries in the world was contaminated. Several more generations of Kazakhs will feel the consequences of these disastrous experiments on their health.

It is for this reason that thirty years ago, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union on August 29, 1991, the people of Kazakhstan made a fundamental decision in favor of a world free of nuclear weapons. By decree of the then Head of State, the world's largest nuclear test site was closed.

Furthermore, in the same year, after gaining independence, Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons and completely disarmed the fourth most powerful nuclear potential in the world, which was superior to the nuclear forces of France, Great Britain and China together.

It should also be noted that it was in Semipalatinsk in 2006 that the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan signed the Treaty, according to which all of Central Asia became a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. So, precisely this year it has been 15 years since the creation of our area.

Therefore, during more than thirty years of independence, Kazakhstan, by its own example, has been an effective model of the path to a world free of nuclear weapons. Today, our anti-nuclear fight is one of the most important components of the national idea and the key axis in the country's foreign policy.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Now it is extremely important not to limit ourselves only to appeals, but to take concrete actions to move our planet towards a future free of nuclear weapons. For example, a concrete step in this direction would be to strengthen cooperation between all Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.

In this context, an important step is observed in the signing in the near future of the Memorandum of Cooperation between our two Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. Currently, the Central Asian countries are finalizing the approval of the text of the Memorandum, the draft of which we received in May of this year from the OPANAL Secretariat. In this regard, I would like to express once again a special thanks to the Secretary General and his entire team for the work done in this regard.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to inform you that, from October 4 to November 4 of this year in New York, within the framework of the First Committee of the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the consideration and subsequent voting will take place on an updated version of the draft resolution on the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World.

By the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan, previously in 2015 and 2018 this resolution was already adopted by the UN General Assembly during its seventy and seventy-third sessions.

For this reason, expressing our gratitude to all OPANAL Member States and other countries for their support on previous occasions, we invite them to study the possibility of acting this time as co-sponsors and / or sponsors of the aforementioned document.

Concluding my speech, on behalf of the Kazakh side I would like to wish OPANAL many successes for this session. We trust that OPANAL will continue to make its great contribution to the preservation of peace and nuclear disarmament. And, of course, you can count on the full support of the Embassy of Kazakhstan.

Thank you very much for your attention.