



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

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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ANIBAL CABRAL (URUGUAY) FOR THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF OPANAL 2021**

Mr. President, we salute the Member States and observers represented here today, as well as the officials from the Secretariat of OPANAL.

We would like to personally thank the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico for having offered a venue to host the General Conference this year.

I would especially like to thank the Secretary General for his report. Similarly, it is an honor to participate in this General Conference as the current President of the Council together with the Presidency and the two Vice Presidencies.

We reaffirm the commitment of Uruguay with the multilateral efforts in favor of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, having ratified most of the multilateral agreements.

Uruguay has been party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons since 1970, an instrument that constitutes the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament regime and, since 2018, is part of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

By ratifying this agreement, Uruguay reaffirms its condition as a pacifist country and non-possessor of nuclear weapons and its firm commitment to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this sense, its adherence to the multilateral normative framework puts into practice a foreign policy that privileges and promotes the need to continue

advancing in negotiations at multilateral level, in order to achieve general and complete disarmament, under a strict international regime.

Our country is concerned that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force, which is why we appeal to this Assembly to those States whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force.

Uruguay calls upon the International Community to make maximum efforts to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and to take significant steps towards a more stable and secure world, with a sense of collective purpose. Our survival depends on it.

At the regional level, we have gained experience in these last fifty years, by being party to the Tlatelolco Treaty and the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which was the inspiration for the creation of other zones.

We would like to highlight the importance that the Coordinations of OPANAL at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, New York and Vienna have for the Agency.

Regarding the Draft Resolutions, we especially want to mention the one on Gender, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and to recognize the valuable contribution of women in the region in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, especially nuclear weapons.

It should be noted that Uruguay ran for and was elected as a Member of the OPANAL Council for the 2018-2021 period, as well as running and elected in 2020 and re-elected in 2021 to Chair the Committee on Contributions and Administrative and Budgetary Matters. This year we finished both terms with the enormous satisfaction that we have contributed to the work of the Agency and we can affirm that the experience has been extremely enriching.

In 2019, at the request of the Secretary-General, I had the privilege of representing OPANAL in the Seminar of Representatives of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the city of Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

On that occasion, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) expressed its interest in strengthening collaboration with our region through a Memorandum of Understanding. Following up on this approach, on June 29, 2020, the Executive Secretary of

AFCONE transmitted a memorandum proposal. Faced with this scenario, the Council decided to create the Technical Group and work on a counterproposal.

I want to express my gratitude to all the Member States that participated in the three sessions of the Working Group as well as for the trust placed in me for the completion of the negotiation.

I would also like to recall that while exercising the Presidency of the Council on 14 February, I had the honor of giving the commemorative speech of the Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in the Tres Culturas Square.

Likewise, we are pleased to mention that we are up to date with our financial obligations with the Agency, as well as those derived from Articles 14 and 24 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Mr. President, to conclude, we especially want to highlight the commitment and performance of the Secretary-General of OPANAL, the Brazilian Ambassador Flavio Bonzanini, who after taking office has had to deal with the global COVID-19 pandemic and implement new forms of communication and virtual work, Uruguay thanks you for your constant support to the cause of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you very much.