



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

21 June 2022

Inf.19/2022
Original:English

**First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
(TPNW)**

**Statement by Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini,
Secretary-General of OPANAL**

21 June 2022

Vienna, Austria

Check against delivery

Mr. President,

In my capacity as Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, I am pleased to convey warm congratulations to you, Ambassador Kmentt, for your election to conduct the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

I am certain that under your leadership, this Meeting will be able to take all relevant decisions regarding the establishment of the procedural and institutional framework of the Treaty, as well as to set the path towards its effective operation. You can count on the full support and cooperation of OPANAL for your work ahead.

Mr. President,

The forecasts in the increase in the size of nuclear arsenals and their continued modernization, as it was estimated in the last report on world nuclear forces by SIPRI, is a matter of deep concern for the international community and the Member States of OPANAL are not the exception. This has been reflected in several joint positionings of the region, particularly, in the Declarations to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Moreover, the current geopolitical scenario is, to say the least, alarming and worrisome. The potential use and threat of use of nuclear weapons should be condemned, as a matter of principle, in the most serious terms by the entire international community. Thus, the explicit and reiterated threats of use of nuclear weapons by one nuclear armed state are unacceptable, as it should be to any nuclear armed state or military coalition relying on nuclear deterrence.

The First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW provides those States committed to support the prohibition norm on nuclear weapons not only with a relevant platform to express their concerns about the nuclear risk, but also with another venue to take joint actions and work on effective measures on nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

The entry into force of the TPNW, on 22 January 2021, allowed the Treaty to join the path towards the total elimination of those weapons of mass destruction, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and within clearly established time frames, that have marked the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the NPT. Our region has been critical and has spearheaded these efforts. Of the current 61 States Parties of the TPNW, 24 are also parties

to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which demonstrates the compatibility of these Treaties as fundamental means in our joint quest for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In particular, the experience of OPANAL, whose operation has continued uninterrupted for more than five decades, is of special relevance for the TPNW. One of the lessons learned is that international treaties are what States Parties make of them. For instance, the Treaty of Tlatelolco evolved and was further tailored -through a series of amendments to respond to the needs and challenges of the States Parties to the Treaty.

Today, the States parties to the TPNW will have the opportunity to make important decisions for its future functioning. For this reason, I would like to underline the importance of considering this new international regime as a living entity that will further evolve, in order to respond to future challenges, rather than a static entity.

Mr. President,

Latin America and the Caribbean, true to their tradition of respect for International Law, sought security through an unprecedented treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, that has served as an inspiration to four other regions. Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Mongolia sum 115 States. We believe it is possible to eliminate the permanent threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Moreover, we are present here today to contribute from our experience and support the logical convergence between Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the TPNW.

We also believe that, with the universalization and effective implementation of another landmark treaty: the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we will be on the right path towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons through the establishment of a universal nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Thank you, Mr. President,