



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

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**25th Anniversary of the Opening for Signature of the African Nuclear  
Weapons Free Zone Treaty – Treaty of Pelindaba**

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini

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

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Dear friends,*

I would like to start my intervention by congratulating all States Parties to the African Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty for the decision of convening this commemorative event which marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba. It is a pleasure and a great honor to participate in this event, in my capacity, as the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

*Dear friends,*

On a day like today, a quarter of a century ago, 47 of the continent's 53 States signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and prohibiting the states to develop, manufacture, possess, acquire, keep in stock, conduct any research or to have

any control over nuclear weapons, in order to keep their territories free of these threats, for good.

Although it has taken a long time and has come a long way, a great deal of progress has been made, and the event we celebrate today is a great reminder of all the efforts that came together to achieve the creation of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone on the African continent. As it is the case with landmark international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation, this accomplishment was possible thanks to the influence of some historic and critical events such as the end of the Cold War, the end of Apartheid and the celebration of multiracial elections in South Africa in 1994, but most importantly due to the cooperative spirit and commitment of the region to work together in order to achieve world free of nuclear weapons.

*Dear friends,*

The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America was not consolidated right after the opening for signature and entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It took more than three decades to achieve its universality. For this reason, our region is aware of the challenges in the path to the universalization of a Treaty. OPANAL has been central in these efforts. Likewise, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) has a key role in the strengthening and consolidation of the Treaty of Pelindaba and also monitor, keep on track and regulate the African nuclear weapon free zone by being responsible for encouraging regional and sub-regional cooperation programs for the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, and to promote that African States take responsibility for their natural resources and, in particular, for nuclear material and protection against toxic waste.

*Dear friends,*

Protocols to the treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones are crucial for the perseverance and security of such zones. Despite the fact that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is the only treaty which Additional Protocols have been signed and ratified by the nuclear armed States, this situation represents a matter of concern for OPANAL. Similarly, in order to continue with the consolidation and strengthening of the Treaty of Pelindaba, as well as the stability and development of the African continent, it is necessary and a matter of great relevance, that the States that have not yet signed or ratified the three Protocols of the Treaty proceed to do so. For this reason, I invite you all to join our efforts in calling upon nuclear armed states to reconsider the scope of their reservation and provide effective security assurances to all States parties of nuclear-weapons-free zones.

*Dear friends,*

The close cooperation and collaboration between AFCONE and OPANAL are central in the international efforts towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapons-free world. In that regard, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight that AFCONE and OPANAL, two entities created by treaties establishing nuclear-weapons-free zones and regional agencies entirely devoted to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, maintain close talks in order to further strengthen our cooperation. A clear example of the aforementioned was the OPANAL-AFCONE Joint Communiqué, on 22 January 2021, on the occasion of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in which we also expressed our commitment to strengthening the norms established by the treaties that created nuclear weapon free zones to achieve and preserve a world free of those highly threatening weapons.

Moreover, on 14 February 2021, the Executive Secretary of AFCONE participated in the commemoration of the anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL looks forward to joining efforts during the IV Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia that will take place this summer.

*Dear friends,*

Let me conclude my intervention by sharing with you one more time that I am delighted to have the opportunity, at least virtually due to the ongoing pandemic, to join you in this honorable event.

I sincerely thank you all of you for your attention.