



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

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High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am pleased to speak at this high-level meeting on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

This commemoration is of the outmost relevance for the 33 Member States of OPANAL. Since its inception, in 2013, our region has agreed on an annual consensus declaration, which demonstrates the historic commitment of Latin America and the Caribbean to the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

On that regard, I would like to highlight some of the most relevant aspects stressed by the Member States of OPANAL through the joint declaration issued to commemorate this occasion:

- The Member States of OPANAL consider the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons as a violation to the UN Charter, a violation of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, and constitute a crime against humanity.
- We recall that the prohibition of nuclear weapons is a means to contribute to the elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within clearly established timeframes and that the elimination is the only truly effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.
- We call upon nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defense doctrines and policies and to comply fully with their legal obligations and unequivocal commitments to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay.

- We also call upon non-nuclear weapon States that are covered by extended nuclear deterrence policies by means of military alliances to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons from their security and defense policies.
- We express our concern for the erosion of the treaty-based disarmament architecture and firmly support all bilateral, regional or multilateral instruments that contribute to achieve nuclear disarmament and call upon all States to promote and strengthen international peace and security.
- We express our alarm and dismay by the threats to use nuclear weapons, by the increased operational alertness of nuclear arsenals and the increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric. We stress that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We condemn unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.
- We call upon nuclear-weapon States to provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees of non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the States parties of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in accordance with international treaties which establish them and their additional protocols.
- We underline the responsibility of all States Parties for the full implementation of the NPT, and urge the nuclear-weapon States to take immediate action for the full and effective implementation of article VI in compliance with their legal obligations.
- We regret that, despite the efforts of the President of the Tenth Review Conference of the NPT and the valuable participation of the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which are also States Parties to the NPT, for the second consecutive time the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final document or recommendations to advance implementation of the Treaty.
- We urge nuclear-weapon States that made interpretative declarations concerning Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco which are contrary to the spirit of the Treaty, to examine the proposals made by OPANAL with the aim of resolving this problem, giving full and unequivocal security assurances to the States that comprise the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to respect the militarily denuclearized character of the zone of application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.
- We encourage the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones by means of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned and stress the importance of these zones as a contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

- We reaffirm our support to the objective of creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in accordance with the relevant UN General Assembly resolutions.
- We reiterate our commitment to continue to promote the dialogue and cooperation among Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, including Mongolia, and deeply regret the failure to convene the Fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, in accordance with the resolution 73/71, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, on 13 December 2018.
- Last but not least, the Member States of OPANAL recognize the valuable contribution of women from the region in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security, and reiterate their commitment to continue promoting their full and effective representation and participation in the processes of policy formulation, planning and execution related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

I thank you, Mr. President.