



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

Secretariat

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Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini

Secretary General of OPANAL

Mr. Chair,

The vast majority of States continue to be an object of indifference from those relying in the possession of nuclear weapons and the threat of its use, allegedly in the name of their national security. The existence of more than thirteen thousand nuclear weapons poses an unacceptable threat to humankind, a danger that becomes more serious day by day. Unfortunately, there has been no advance, whatsoever, on nuclear disarmament or, at least, a clear signaling of such objective from nuclear armed States. This is a *status quo* that OPANAL Member States deeply regret.

Mr. Chair,

Last week, on 26th September 2021, OPANAL Member States commemorated the International Day Against the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons by issuing a joint declaration in which the 33 States Party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – Treaty of Tlatelolco underlined their priorities and common position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including a new call to four nuclear powers to withdraw or modify their interpretative declarations concerning Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which are contrary to the spirit of the Treaty, and to examine the proposals made by OPANAL with the aim of resolving this problematic.

Mr. Chair,

Also last week, on 30th September 2021, OPANAL Member States celebrated the XXVII Session of the General Conference -the supreme organ of OPANAL- during which three landmark resolutions were adopted by consensus.

The first resolution approved a Memorandum of Understanding between OPANAL and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), which contributes to foster the cooperation and collaboration between the nuclear-weapons-free zones established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Pelindaba Treaty.

The second one recognizes the enormous contribution of interns to the work of OPANAL by establishing a remunerated internship programme, starting in January 2022, to pay a symbolic sum to all our interns no matter their nationality. In spite of the financial restrictions and the negative economic impact of the current pandemic, all 33 Member States agreed and welcomed this initiative.

The third resolution is on Gender, Non-proliferation and Disarmament. This initiative deserves a special mention during a time in which gender considerations have become central in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Through this resolution all 33 Member States recognize the valuable contribution of women in the region. Moreover, it promotes and mainstreams the adoption of a gender perspective and supports the equal, full and effective participation of women in the Agency, its organs and programmes.

Mr. Chair,

With these actions, OPANAL Member States reaffirm their historical commitment to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons by including new perspectives and promoting collaborative efforts beyond our region. We also look forward to contributing, in 2022, to the Tenth NPT Review Conference and the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.