



General Conference

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Agenda Item 6

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Statement by Ecuador

Mr. President,

Ecuador is a country of peace, which is written in its Constitution, but beyond this fact of political and legal nature, the attachment to peace is engraved at the bottom of the conscience of the great majority of Ecuadorians.

In this search for peace, Ecuador understood very early that the impact of nuclear weapons is global and, therefore, the solution must also be global.

Indeed, Ecuador was an active participant in this group of visionaries who 52 years ago saw the need to make Latin America the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region, with the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco which, in turn, gave rise to OPANAL, whose creation we proudly celebrate today, its 50 years. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, preceded the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and undoubtedly strengthens the non-proliferation regime.

In this regard, Ecuador reiterates its firm position on the urgent need for full implementation of the three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It also highlights the concern about the setback experienced in the implementation of the obligations of Article VI of such instrument related to nuclear disarmament.

My country remains firmly committed to the promotion and support for all actions aimed at strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We have constantly reaffirmed that the only effective guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and prohibition.

In this regard, Ecuador is pleased to have actively participated in the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and has the honor to remember that, in the framework of the 74th United Nations General Assembly, the past 25 September, it deposited the instrument of ratification of that Treaty. With this deposit, Ecuador has ratified its commitment to peace, world security and the prohibition of nuclear weapons; in short, its vocation for the preeminence of human beings in international relations.

We are convinced that nuclear disarmament requires a paradigmatic change, an effort and commitment much more extensive than a single document or treaty. It requires a movement that generates a global shift in consciousness that be lasting. Therefore, the TPNW is not an end in itself, but rather a great step in the right direction.

My country reiterates that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in no way conflicts with the regime created by the NPT. On the contrary, it reinforces it by clearly stating that these weapons are prohibited by a legally binding international instrument, as we have argued in all multilateral forums, including, of course, this one. Ecuador also considers that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons strengthens the IAEA safeguards system. It reaffirms the regulation enshrined in Article III, and obliges States that already have a high level of safeguards to maintain them, while encouraging all Parties to further increase their level of commitment in this field.

Mr. President:

Coherently, my country has supported the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in other regions of the planet, such as the Middle East. For this reason, we have emphasized the importance of Resolution 73/546 of the United Nations General Assembly on the convening of a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and others of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

For Ecuador, international law constitutes the norm of conduct that obliges to refrain from executing unilateral actions that threaten peace. The dialogue strengthens international coexistence. Therefore, we deplore the questions to the multilateral system and the unilateral

actions that put at risk the acquired commitments and the international security regime as a whole.

It is true that unilateralism and the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament for so many decades have generated much frustration in the international community. But OPANAL is an example of success, despite its limited resources. OPANAL is an example of success, despite its limited resources [sic.]. OPANAL has been present in the main multilateral forums dedicated to disarmament and non-proliferation, since we have understood that by abstaining or omitting participation in this type of mechanisms, it allow others to decide for us. Although we do not possess weapons of mass destruction, through OPANAL we promote the principles of destruction and elimination of nuclear weapons, as a principle.

The fact that OPANAL remains in force after 50 years has a meaning that transcends nuclear disarmament. It represents what can happen when Latin America puts the principles before any other consideration, when we are willing to join, take risks and defend what is right. Nations are valued not for their destructive power, but for their willingness to dialogue, negotiate, forge alliances and strengthen and maintain peace through the multilateral regime of which OPANAL is a great example.

Mr. President, last but not least, we believe that for the in force status and the prestige that OPANAL has maintained in recent years, the management of its Secretary-General, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, has been decisive. As we have stated on other occasions, it has been a true honor and a luxury for the delegation of Ecuador to have the privilege of sharing in this forum with the Ambassador of Macedo, a great diplomat, a pride not only for his country but for all Latin America. They have been some years of great learning, of a true school led by Ambassador Macedo who we appreciate in all that he is worth.

Thank you very much for that, Ambassador, and the best for you in this new stage of your life.

Thank you also Mr. President.