



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

General Conference

XXVI Session
7 November 2019
Agenda Item 6

Original: Spanish
Unofficial translation

Statement by Brazil

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the Member States,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazil thanks the Pan American Institute of Geography and History for its willingness and generosity to host this XXVI Session of the General Conference of OPANAL.

I thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report and the entire Secretariat for the efficient preparation of this Session. I thank, in particular, the active contribution of the Secretary-General through the presentation of concrete proposals to address the subjects of interest in our agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2019, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of OPANAL, the only regional agency in the world entirely dedicated to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Over the past 50 years, OPANAL has decisively contributed to nuclear disarmament, either through its role as an inspiration for existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and for the ones to come, or for its active involvement in negotiations on the subject.

As an important instance of coordination and dialogue, the Agency has promoted the harmonious participation of its member States in international efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Agency is and will continue to be the voice of our countries in defense of our right to live in a world without nuclear weapons.

However, I believe that everyone present here knows that the departure of Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares from the position of Secretary-General on 31 December will be a great loss for the Agency and for us who have interacted regularly with the Ambassador over the last years.

On behalf of Brazil, I want to convey my deepest gratitude and recognition to Ambassador Macedo Soares for the services provided. In his six years as Secretary-General of OPANAL, Ambassador Macedo Soares always performed his duties with great efficiency and dedication, prioritizing the interests of the States that integrate the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean and the need to ensure the respect for the militarily denuclearized nature of the zone of application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Thanks to his intelligence and effort, the work of OPANAL has gained in projection and dynamism, contributing to increase its relevance in discussions about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I would like, therefore, to pay public tribute to Ambassador Macedo Soares for the excellent performance of his duties.

But not everything is sadness. I suspect that at the end of this General Conference we will have elected a new qualified Secretary-General and a great enthusiast of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The long diplomatic experience of Ambassador Flávio Bonzanini and his recognized aptitude will allow him to lead over the Organization in an efficient and committed manner.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we approach 2020, I would like to highlight the centrality of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for the prevalence of a regime based on rules and cooperation to face the threat of nuclear weapons.

Brazil considers that our priority should be to protect and strengthen the foundations of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, particularly the NPT. We should seize the opportunity offered by the Review Conference to reaffirm and strengthen the fundamental agreement upon which the Treaty is founded: the commitment of non-nuclear-weapon States not to try to acquire those weapons, which should have as a counterpart the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith.

Although the NPT has been relatively successful in limiting horizontal proliferation, it has not, to date, succeeded in fulfilling the promise of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That is why I stress the importance of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in 2017, which was negotiated to be fully compatible with the NPT and to strengthen each of its three pillars.

We welcome the rapid pace of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty, which already has two thirds of the ratifications necessary for its entry into force.

I would also like to underline the importance of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia in April 2020. The Conference, to which OPANAL contributed greatly, will allow us to consider ways to improve cooperation between Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, the agencies of treaties and the States interested, in order to promote coordination and convergence in the enforcement of the treaties provisions and in strengthening the regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In these months prior to the fourth Conference, it is important that the delegations of the Member States of OPANAL in New York coordinate themselves to contribute constructively

to the solution of the impasse about the participation of Western Sahara in the meeting and allow preparations proceed normally.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is an important example of the pacifist tradition of our region, which has roots in our historical and geographical circumstances, but also derives from our diplomatic creativity.

By declaring Latin America and the Caribbean as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, our countries demonstrated the determination to break the perverse logic that dominated the Cold War thinking. Our region is proud to have devised a way to replace the security dilemma with the “security of cooperation.”

Despite the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to disarmament and non-proliferation, the world will only be a safe place when we achieve the goal of the total elimination of nuclear arsenals.

Nearly 75 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki and 40 years after the entry into force of the NPT, this fundamental objective remains elusive.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is convinced that the best guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used is their elimination. While some States possess nuclear weapons, others will be tempted to acquire or develop them, and the world population will be at risk.

Let's continue working together through OPANAL so that other regions and countries emulate the example of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you, very much.