



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

**General Conference**

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XXVII Session  
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Agenda Item 6

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*Courtesy translation*

**Statement by the Cuban Delegation to the XXVII Ordinary Session of OPANAL -  
General Conference 30 September 2021**

Mr. President,  
Esteemed Secretary General of OPANAL,  
Distinguished Representatives of the Member States of the Agency,

Cuba welcomes the convening of the XXVII Ordinary Session of the General Conference of OPANAL held this time virtually and in an extraordinary fashion in light of COVID-19.

We are proud of the significant contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to nuclear disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security, with the creation of the first densely populated zone on the planet, free of nuclear weapons, by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The merit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in having kept our region free of nuclear weapons and on the sidelines of the nuclear arms race, confirms the effectiveness of this Zone free of nuclear weapons, as a disarmament measure.

Similarly, we are pleased to be part of the first region formally proclaimed "Zone of Peace", on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, in January, 2014. Proclamation that ratified the firm commitment of our region in preventing the catastrophic long-term global humanitarian and long-term impact of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The COVID-19 situation has shown the fragility of a world where universal access to basic health services is not guaranteed, while nuclear arsenals are modernized and expanded, under the pretext of military concepts or doctrines of defense and security, which continue to threaten our survival.

It is worrisome that, 76 years after the criminal bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, humanity is still threatened by the existence of approximately 13,865 nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

We have just celebrated the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, an important initiative promoted by Cuba and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, with the aim of raising awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the need for their total elimination, recognizing that they are inhumane, immoral and ethically indefensible.

We welcome the convening of the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of the first meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; we also hope that the early convening of the Fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia will be possible.

We urge the Nuclear-Weapon States that made interpretative declarations and reservations to Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco to withdraw them without further delay, in order to provide full security assurances to the States that make up the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. In that regard, we welcome the work undertaken by OPANAL to that end.

Mr. President,

Cuba welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January, 2021 and is proud that 21 States Parties to that instrument are from our region. Such Treaty is the result of multilateral discussions of more than 70 years which establishes a new norm of international law for the categorical prohibition of nuclear weapons in all circumstances, whilst at the same time provides a solid and legally binding framework for the destruction and total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner with specific time frames.

We reject the U.S. government's decision to withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal, which has a unilateral impact on regional and international stability and security.

We insist that the only effective way to avoid the terrible impact of nuclear weapons is their total, verifiable, transparent and irreversible elimination.

As the Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, expressed: "The world has to defend the most important cause of all: the survival of the species. A world with nuclear weapons cannot exist. Peace is not compatible with nuclear weapons, a fact that anyone can verify." <sup>1</sup>

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Fidel in 2012, in a meeting with members of the Peace Cruise, as part of the 'Global Forum for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons'.