**INTERVENTION BY THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA**

**AMBASSADOR PEDRO NUÑEZ MOSQUERA**

**XXVI SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF OPANAL**

**MEXICO CITY, 15 NOVEMBER 2018**

Mr. President,

Esteemed Secretary-General of OPANAL,

Distinguished representatives of the Agency’s Member States,

The Government and people of Cuba are proud to be part of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone by virtue of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Our leaders consolidated that position when they formally proclaimed Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Zone in the Second Session of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), celebrated in Havana in January 2014, in order to banish forever the use and threat of use of force in our region.

On September 26, our president Miguel Díaz-Canel, joined in the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which takes place each year within the framework of the UN General Assembly. This is an initiative promoted by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, endorsed by the international community and which contributes to the goal of preserving international peace and security.

We must remain united in the difficult task of fighting for the total and verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons because there is the possibility of a nuclear war. Currently, there exists more than 14 thousand nuclear weapons and a new generation of these is developing in a vertical proliferation, rarely mentioned, constituting a danger for the whole planet.

Mr. President,

Cuba maintains a firm commitment to strengthening and consolidating multilateralism. In this sense, we will continue to promote nuclear disarmament as the highest priority in the disarmament sphere. To demonstrate this, on 30 January 2018 our country became the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

With this Treaty that bans the use, existence and development of nuclear weapons, the international community clearly states that nuclear weapons are not only inhumane, immoral and ethically indefensible; from now on, they are also illegal. We show the necessary political will that implemented and complemented through ethical means the total elimination of these arsenals in an effective, transparent and irreversible manner.

We reaffirm the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination or conditionality and reject the imposition of undue limitations to access materials, equipment and nuclear technology for peaceful purposes required by the least economically developed countries.

Cuba rejects the security policies and military doctrines based on nuclear deterrence and urges the States possessing nuclear-weapons to show political will and rectify their positions, particularly in the framework of the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation and during this cycle of its review. It is urgent to advance the implementation of the NPT and the commitments made in its past Review Conferences.

Thus, we support the initiatives advanced by OPANAL to urge the States possessing nuclear weapons to suppress the interpretive declarations issued to Additional Protocols I and II, contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Mr. President,

Let us all fulfill the collective responsibility to save our planet from the danger of nuclear weapons, for the good of present and future generations.

Thank you.