



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

**General Conference**

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Agenda item 6

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**Statement by AFCONE**

Your Excellency, the President of the General Conference of OPANAL,

Your Excellency the Secretary General of OPANAL, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) congratulates Your Excellency for your election as President of the 28<sup>th</sup> OPANAL General Conference.

The Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean was the first Nuclear Weapon Free Zone to be established (globally) when it entered into force in 1969. I wish to commend OPANAL for the trail blazing stewardship of the Zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, establishing the initial NWFZ framework, as well as best practices that the subsequent Nuclear Weapon Free Zones have emulated.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, as well as the other three regional Free Zones, and the National Free Zone of Mongolia, comprises 114 states and almost 40% of the world's population. That is a strong constituency that together can effectively advocate for world peace and security.

Your Excellency the President, Distinguished Delegates,

As we commemorate this important anniversary in the history of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, let us remind ourselves that the entry into force of the Tlatelolco Treaty in 1969, established a precedent in international law and the political philosophy of peace. For this, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy wishes to congratulate the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, and to recognize the bold and leadership role that they played in advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

As we celebrate the achievements of Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the role that OPANAL has played as the Secretariat of the Treaty, let's be mindful that a significant percentage of the geographical surface of the world is still not within any nuclear weapon free zone.

AFCONE and OPANAL have a memorandum of understanding since 2021, through which both organizations are cooperating to foster progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Through the implementation of this MoU, the AFCONE hopes that other regions (particularly in the Middle East and in the Northern Hemisphere) that do not yet have Nuclear Weapon Free Zones will work diligently and urgently towards creating such zones; to further reduce the geographical footprint of nuclear weapons and by extension promoting international peace and security.

Your Excellency the President, Distinguished Delegates,

I recall the 10th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was concluded on 26 August 2022, without an outcome.

The AFCONE is striving to enhance cooperation with OPANAL, as well as with the other Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, to leverage the collective strength of our constituencies to support the NPT Prep Comms to ensure a successful outcome to the 11th NPT review conference in 2026.

Your Excellency the President, Distinguished Delegates,

The AFCONE believes that greater cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among the NWFZs would further strengthen the Non-Proliferation regime and accelerate progress towards achieving the goals of the NPT. We are convinced that by working together, the joint impact of our free zones would be significantly greater than the cumulative outcome of the different zones working independently.

In conclusion, I pledge the unwavering support of AFCONE to the OPANAL Secretariat, and I wish OPANAL greater success in engendering peace and security in Latin America, in the Caribbean and throughout the World.

Thank you!