



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 the Federative Republic of Brazil

Your Excellency the President of the XXVIII Session of the General Conference and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, through whom I greet the representatives of the Member States and Observers,

Your Excellency the Secretary-General of OPANAL, Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini, through whom I greet the entire professional staff of the Secretariat,

First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Mario Búcaro Flores on his presidency of this session of the General Conference, as well as to the newly elected Vice-Presidents. My delegation is committed to providing all the necessary support to ensure the success of this meeting. Brazil also thanks the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report and all the staff of the Secretariat for their dedication in the preparation of this meeting.

It has been a decade since the General Conference was held outside of Mexico City, the headquarters of OPANAL. In that regard, I recognize Guatemala's hospitality in receiving delegations on this occasion, in a gesture that reflects appreciation for this Organization and fosters the vitality of the Treaty of Tlatelolco regime.

Mr. President,

It is imperative to revitalize OPANAL. The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a pioneer in declaring Latin America and the Caribbean a nuclear-weapon-free zone, displacing the harmful logic of competition with the virtuous logic of cooperation. In addition, it was a pioneer in creating OPANAL, the only regional body dedicated exclusively to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty has roots in our historical and geographical circumstances, and it inspired the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. OPANAL plays an important role in maintaining our region as a zone of peace and is a respected voice as a defender of the inherent right to live in a world without nuclear weapons.

We are proud of the achievements of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL. However, in the face of the unprecedented challenges we face at the global level, it is no longer enough to be proud of a pioneering spirit that dates back nearly six decades. It is crucial to update and strengthen OPANAL. Pioneering is something that must be renewed every day.

That approach has guided Brazil's participation in OPANAL, particularly in the Council and in the Committee on Contributions and Administrative and Budgetary Matters. In the preparation of the present session of the General Conference, we have sought to break the inertia in draft resolutions: to encourage a collective reflection on how to strengthen the much-needed voice of OPANAL in the current context.

Revitalization starts at home. For that reason, Brazil has worked together with Argentina to develop a comprehensive draft resolution aimed at improving the working methods of both the Secretariat and the governing bodies, with the aim of promoting interactivity and inclusiveness in the deliberations.

The Brazilian presidency of the CCAAP has given priority focus to the modernization of OPANAL's technological infrastructure, paving the way to overcome a significant gap. At this General Conference, we submitted a draft resolution that proposes to lay the groundwork for the next phase of that process: the creation of a new OPANAL website, which will play a crucial role in our revitalization work, particularly from a public diplomacy perspective.

The revitalization of OPANAL also means having a permanent headquarters. Throughout its 54 years of existence, the Agency has lacked a space of its own, a need that all international organizations must meet. In preparation for this General Conference, Brazil and Mexico have worked collaboratively to update the draft resolution, with the aim of raising the political priority of this item and ensuring that the text contributes to the host State's efforts to finalize the loan of its own space for OPANAL.

Mr. President,

As we prepared for this General Conference, Brazil diligently reviewed each draft resolution with the aim of ensuring that they accurately reflect our current collective priorities. In this regard, our delegation proposed a substantial enhancement of the text related to "gender and disarmament" and advocated for the integration of a gender perspective across texts concerning the Secretariat and its educational activities.

As we reflected on how to further strengthen the important contribution of OPANAL in the realm of education for disarmament, it became clear to us that, in addition to the several courses it organizes, the Agency could encourage scholarly publications from Latin American and Caribbean authors in the field of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, with an emphasis on the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore propose that it does so through the establishment of an award to an outstanding academic work. We suggest that this award could be named after Judge Antonio Augusto Cançado Trindade, paying tribute for his defense, both in the academia and in the International Court of Justice, of the right to live in a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Brazil's current emphasis on the revitalization of OPANAL stems from our conviction that nuclear-weapon-free zones can play an active role in the much-needed reinvigoration of the multilateral nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime, which has the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as its cornerstone. After all, NFWZs are not an end in themselves. They should be stepping stones towards the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

The NPT regime is under unprecedented stress. By the end of the current NPT review cycle, in 2026, 16 years will have elapsed since its last agreed outcome. All OPANAL Members continue to comply with our obligations and commitments. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same of Nuclear Weapon States in relation to their Article VI obligations as well as to their commitments agreed to in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Nuclear weapons are still too numerous and nuclear arsenals continue to be upgraded, in quantity and in quality. Deterrence doctrines centered around nuclear weapons have regained ascendancy. Ominously, the most egregious form of weapons of mass destruction is openly used to threaten and to intimidate.

Against this bleak backdrop, the matter of legally binding negative security assurances has regained significant importance. Brazil is pleased to note that, since our previous General Conference, channels of dialogue have been opened with all four Parties to Additional Protocols I and II whose declarations upon signing or ratifying contain problematic language. Brazil urges the Council to progress towards an in-depth conversation with these Parties, potentially delineating the various legal issues at hand and addressing them through a step-by-step approach.

In the present global context, it is imperative for nuclear-weapon-free zones to maintain dialogue amongst themselves, so as to exchange experiences, best practices, and insights. To this end, Brazil has suggested that the General Conference approves its first-ever resolution regarding the

relations between OPANAL and the five nuclear-weapons-free zones. In New York, our region will proceed with consultations aimed at presenting, in the next session of the UN General Assembly, a revised version of our joint proposal involving a new study on the issue of nuclear-weapons-free zones. We look forward to a future convening of the 4th Conference of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Mongolia.

There are, of course, developments triggering some hope and optimism. The 2nd Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to take place in just a few weeks under Mexican presidency, will continue to build and strengthen the regime.

GRULAC is already the largest regional group within that TPNW and the government of President Lula made it a priority to ratify the treaty, which is currently being examined by the Brazilian Congress.

Mr. President,

My final point in this general intervention is that a revitalized OPANAL also serves as a privileged space for transparency and confidence-building efforts in the region.

In this regard, I would like to refer to the information already provided at the General Conference regarding the discussions between Brazil, IAEA and ABACC on the issue of verification of naval nuclear propulsion within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement.

For Brazil, nuclear naval propulsion constitutes the peaceful application of nuclear energy and is compatible with all its obligations under the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In pursuing this legitimate objective, Brazil reiterates its commitment to transparency and will keep OPANAL member states informed about relevant developments in this field.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.