



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

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Statement by the Republic of Colombia

H.E. Mario Búcaro Flores, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala;

Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL);

Representatives of the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco;

Dear Observers,

It gives me great pleasure to address you at the National Palace of Culture in Guatemala City, on the occasion of the twenty-eighth General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

On behalf of my country, I would like to thank the Government of Guatemala for its hospitality in hosting such an important meeting, at which we will have the opportunity to ratify, as representatives of the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the world, our commitment to its consolidation and, in addition, to reiterate the need to create new Zones as an important measure to counter the risk of nuclear proliferation and in this sense, contribute to disarmament.

The tensions of recent years, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons and the intensification of ballistic missile launches, have brought us to the peak of the nuclear threat since the Cold War, highlighting the dangerous fragility of the presumption that nuclear weapons, defensive and deterrent systems, provide security. As we have said in other disarmament scenarios, nuclear weapons challenge not only that presumption, but the very existence of humanity!

Colombia has promoted the need to build and guarantee peace in order to save life on earth, to build a more dignified, just and responsible society. The peace that we promote, not only as a national agenda but also as an international one, integrates the set of human rights based on dignity

and justice. Peace is, therefore, the means to guarantee human security, the full realization of the human being and the establishment of a just social order that ensures peaceful coexistence.

It is precisely for this reason that we recognize the value of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, an instrument that arises from a need and collective, legal, ethical, and moral responsibility to guarantee peace and security in the region.

Gentlemen;

As members of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean, we have a responsibility to continue to call on the Nuclear-Weapon States to provide negative security assurances.

This call must be amplified and strengthened in all disarmament and non-proliferation scenarios, especially the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which unfortunately for 10 years has not adopted a final document with a plan of action that includes disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Let us recall that, unfortunately, the current security context obliges us to strengthen the multilateral system and to demand progress in the implementation of legally binding instruments in the nuclear field, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 984 of 1995, which recognizes unilateral declarations by each of the nuclear-weapon States providing negative security assurances against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons to non-possessors.

The treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs), such as Tlatelolco, are tools that recognize the importance and validity of these negative security assurances. Strictly speaking, Article 3 of Additional Protocol II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco states that "The Governments represented by the undersigned Plenipotentiaries also undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Contracting Parties of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Although NWFZs are not an end in themselves, but a relevant measure to advance towards nuclear disarmament, it is imperative that their importance be ratified and, in that regard, that the States Parties to Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco be called upon to resolve unilateral interpretative declarations. The work of the Council of OPANAL to promote constructive dialogue in this regard is essential.

Gentlemen;

I would not like to conclude my statement without first thanking the Secretary-General of OPANAL for his commitment and invaluable work in carrying out the coordination with Geneva, New York and Vienna, with the aim of ensuring OPANAL's positive and responsible participation in forums such as the Conference on Disarmament, the First Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference, the sixty-seventh General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the First Committee of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

In this regard, it is inexcusable that I do not reaffirm my Government's will to maintain and guarantee a strong and proponent OPANAL in the multilateral system, including on issues related to disarmament education and the importance of including the gender perspective in the substantive disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Many thanks!