



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 Republic of Costa Rica

Mr. President of this General Conference,

Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen representatives of the Member States,

Ladies and Gentlemen observers,

Costa Rica is grateful for the gracious invitation extended by Ambassador Mario Adolfo Búcaro Flores, Chancellor of the Republic of Guatemala for welcoming the Member States of OPANAL, in this breathtaking palace of culture, whose stained-glass windows and murals remind us of historical periods that testify of the courageous work of the peoples who planted the roots that allow us to be here together today.

Costa Rica would like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Búcaro on his election as President of this conference, as well as the heads of the delegations of Argentina and Uruguay in the exercise of their vice-presidencies and we confirm our full support in the conduct of their work. We would also like to thank the OPANAL Secretariat, who has worked very hard during the entire year to achieve the success of this meeting. My delegation wishes further to applaud His Excellency Ambassador Flávio Bonzanini, Secretary General of OPANAL, for his active role in promoting the values and commitments of this organization as an actor worthy of taking part in meaningful discussions in the international arena, as shown in the report that was previously shared with us.

Costa Rica is a proud early signatory of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, consistent with our historical defense doctrines that are underpinned by dialogue, negotiation between States, peace, and international law.

These views are strongly held by the people of Costa Rica, so it is unacceptable to our country that the threat of nuclear weapons, which has been found to be incompatible with international

law and with international humanitarian law especially, continues plaguing us indiscriminately. Nuclear weapons are not only ethically intolerable, but also illegal.

The nations most interested in reaching the total prohibition of nuclear weapons are those of us who do not own them, because we are convinced that international peace and security cannot be grounded in the doctrines of nuclear distortion. Therefore, we welcome the steps taken by the Council and the Secretariat of OPANAL to reach agreements with the nuclear weapon states that hold interpretative declarations to the Additional Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, so that these declarations may be reviewed and eliminated without delay, respecting the original commitment of the Treaty.

We deeply regret the repeated failures in the review cycles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty that imply major challenges for its implementation. We reiterate the importance of understanding the complementarity between the different instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.

In an international reality as daunting as the current one, Costa Rica deplores that far from making firm and sustained progress towards a complete and generalized nuclear disarmament, we have recently witnessed actions of withdrawal from nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments threatening to disrupt the architecture of international security.

However, today we are here to raise the banner of hope and to look positively on everything that has been achieved so far. A decade ago, countries of the region, including Costa Rica as President, once again took on a strategic role in the work of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, aiming for their total elimination.

Today, we are just a few weeks away from attending the second meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which is progressing steadily. Therefore, we do not want to miss this opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved and urge those who have not yet done so to support and ratify this important tool for peace. As a community, all of us have tools and means to make progress.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones are critical in promoting peace and security, which is why Costa Rica fully endorses the work of OPANAL. Much more can be achieved by understanding its functioning and finding ways to foster cooperation between the existing zones and the potential establishment of new ones. Therefore, we support the idea of conducting a study on this topic.

Although, it has been decided not to submit the draft resolution during this session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Costa Rica will continue to promote this initiative in the coming years.

Mr. President,

Costa Rica is pleased that the issue of gender, non-proliferation and disarmament has been included in the agenda that gathers us, reaffirming that nuclear weapons are not gender neutral. These initiatives are consistent with those undertaken at the Tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2022, where 67 countries issued a joint statement on gender, diversity, and inclusion; and at the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, that took place in June of last year, where the Vienna Plan of Action was adopted, which describes a set of actions to incorporate gender considerations in the implementation of the Treaty as well as in national policies.

My delegation underlines the importance of the full, equal, and effective participation of women in all disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control negotiations and processes, particularly where there is a significant disparity in the ranking and in the number of women in comparison as compared that of men.

In order to make progress toward nuclear disarmament, we have to build a shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. This can be achieved by adopting an inclusive and equitable approach that incorporates a gender perspective in all aspects of global security.

Mr. President,

I cannot conclude my speech without reaffirming Costa Rica's commitment to disarmament and to the promotion of international peace and security in collaboration with all OPANAL members in order to achieve a safer and more peaceful region and world. Our action must be based on the respect of the general principle of law "*pacta sunt servanda*" - agreements must be kept.

Thank you very much.