



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

General Conference

XXVIII Session
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Agenda item 6

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Courtesy translation

Statement by the Republic of Cuba

Mr. President,

Dear Secretary-General of OPANAL,

Distinguished representatives of the Member States of the Agency,

Cuba welcomes the holding of the XXVIII Ordinary Session of the OPANAL General Conference and thanks Guatemala for its willingness to host such an important event.

We are proud that Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region in the world to establish, through an international legal instrument, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has represented a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security over the years.

We recognize the merit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in keeping our region free of nuclear weapons and out of the nuclear arms race, and in the effectiveness of this Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as a disarmament measure. Likewise, we are pleased to be part of the first region formally proclaimed a "Zone of Peace", on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana in January 2014.

We are convinced that a world of peace can only be built on the basis of justice, assuming multilateralism as the only possible way to resolve conflicts and settling our differences with full adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Mr. President,

We are living today in a challenging and complex situation, still under the devastating impact of a pandemic that exacerbated structural inequities and the multidimensional global crisis.

Added to this are threats to international peace and security following the escalation of violence in several regions and the increase in conflicts, with an imminent risk of the use of nuclear weapons.

We express deep concern and alert at the latent danger of a nuclear conflagration, from the devastating effects of which no nation would escape.

It is unacceptable for the nuclear-weapon States to use the resources that should be allocated to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to continue to develop new types of nuclear weapons, as well as to increase and modernize their arsenals, in violation of their legal obligations and unequivocal commitments to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay.

At the same time, we reiterate our support for the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without discrimination of any kind, in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In this regard, we reject the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which limit or restrict, in a discriminatory manner, the legitimate right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We condemn the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which is an example of this.

Mr. President,

The total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner is and must remain the highest priority in the field of disarmament. It is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

We reiterate the call on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies.

We urge the nuclear-weapon States, which have made interpretative declarations to Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which constitute reservations, to withdraw them without further delay, in order to provide full security guarantees to the States that make up the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard, we welcome the work undertaken by OPANAL for that end.

Mr. President,

A positive result achieved in recent years has been the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), in the drafting and negotiation of which Cuba played an active role.

The Treaty is the first international legal norm that categorically prohibits nuclear weapons in all circumstances and provides for their total elimination. In addition, it explicitly qualifies the use of nuclear weapons as an act contrary to international law and international humanitarian law.

We will continue to promote the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a materialization of the humanist thought of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, who said: "The world has to defend the most important cause of all: the survival of the species. A world with nuclear weapons cannot exist. Peace is not compatible with nuclear weapons, a fact that anyone can verify."

Thank you!