



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

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Statement of the Republic of Ecuador

Thank you very much, Mr. President, my delegation extends a warm greeting to the members of OPANAL, to its Secretariat, and especially to the Government of Guatemala for hosting this twenty-eighth Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As several delegations have already pointed out, these are turbulent times that we live in, and when we assumed two world conflicts and many others throughout history, they were sufficient experiences to opt for peace as a common goal of humanity. New confrontations emerge in various parts of the world, with repercussions that are difficult to predict and with thousands of civilian victims that show us the need for and importance of continuing to fight for dialogue, peace, and international security.

In this context, the door that Latin America and the Caribbean have given to the world in search of peace is inevitable. Indeed, that was the main reason why, 56 years ago, several countries in the region, including Ecuador, raised their voices against the major threat and disastrous consequences derived from the use of nuclear weapons at the global level.

As an example to the rest of the world, our States signed and ratified the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Treaty of Tlatelolco, legal framework on which OPANAL was established, so that this Agency promotes dialogue and debate while also encouraging the proscription of this type of weapons in the world.

However, in the years that have passed, Ecuador's commitment to freeing the world from nuclear weapons remains immovable, which vocation maintains the search for peace and global security, as demonstrated by its active participation in the United Nations Security Council.

For Ecuador, disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must advance simultaneously and interrelatedly, and compliance with the obligations of nuclear non-proliferation corresponds to all States.

In this regard, my delegation regrets the lack of commitment to disarmament on the part of the States possessing nuclear weapons, which increase a risk with their unilateral will that radiates throughout the entire planet with the estimated existence of around 12 thousand nuclear weapons currently.

The indicated figure is paradoxical, Mr. President. While social and economic disparities in the world seem insurmountable, development prospects become more and more distant for many countries, others continue to produce and modernize their arsenal of conventional nuclear weapons, without measuring or limiting their spending.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco constitutes a true breaking point for our region, which has the honor of being the first densely populated Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone. From our perspective and with active action by OPANAL, we must maintain and reinforce our call to all States to replicate this experience and consolidate Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones in other regions of the world.

This call must also motivate countries that have not done so to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which has been in force since January 22, 2021, and which constitutes the first multilateral instrument that completely prohibits nuclear weapons.

However, with this great international regulatory advance for Ecuador, the best guarantee against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is their elimination and prohibition.

Ecuador ratified the TPNW on September 25, 2019 and consolidated its commitment to peace, global security, and the proscription of nuclear weapons. As well as its vocation, with the preeminence of human beings, in international relations.

For these reasons, my delegation reiterates the urgent need for the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy. My delegation recognizes, however, that in building of a peaceful world, one of the most complex challenges is ensuring that the approach to the security doctrines of nuclear weapon States evolves towards a humanistic vision.

Although the Member States of the Treaty of Tlatelolco do not possess weapons of mass destruction, we have the moral authority to actively promote the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a principle and to defend it in an unrestricted manner. Consistent with the aforementioned precepts, Ecuador will appreciate having the consent of OPANAL members to continue leading the coordination that this regional Organization will hold in Geneva during the next year.

Likewise, it appreciates the support provided to its candidacy, to the re-election as a member of the Committee on Contributions and Administrative and Budgetary Matters.

The reasons that call us to this General Conference, Mr. President, are without a doubt, and now more than ever a sign of hope in a world, which as I said, is increasingly convulsed, in which we must not faint in the dissemination of our regional vision of peace and security.

Thank you very much.