



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

General Conference

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Statement by the IAEA

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues, I am pleased to address the 2023 general conference of OPANAL.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is a historic achievement, the first treaty of its kind to cover a densely populated area. Only the Antarctic treaty preceded it. The Treaty of Tlatelolco prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and requires its Parties to accept the IAEA safeguards in all their nuclear activities. Its momentum strengthened the international community's resolve to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the diplomatic level, the treaty positioned the region as a key player in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

This very special treaty preceded the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in fact, influenced the provisions of the NPT by guaranteeing the right of all States to benefit from the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

OPANAL plays a unique role in the defense of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is also one of eight intergovernmental organizations with which the IAEA has a cooperation agreement. I am glad to have supported the educational work of OPANAL earlier this year, and I was pleased to address the ninth summer school on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the region.

The IAEA works closely with its thirty-one Member States from Latin America and the Caribbean. Together, we improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of citizens. Every year we train and offer opportunities to hundreds of experts and scientists in the region.

Since I took over as Director General of the IAEA in late 2019, I have launched a number of initiatives that have been embraced around the world, including here in my home region. The 'Race of Hope' initiative helps countries fight cancer through a holistic and sustainable approach that expands access to and knowledge of nuclear medicine. Our most recent joint initiative with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, is called Atoms for Food. This initiative provides countries with specific services to improve nutrition and food security using nuclear technology. For

example, mutation breeding to obtain better crop variants and the sterile insect technique to reduce destructive pest populations. Like these two, there are many more examples of our joint efforts with the Member States that make this region healthier, safer, less polluted, more prosperous.

In closing, let me thank you for your work towards our common goal of Atoms for Peace and Development, and assure you of the IAEA's continued commitment to this noble mission and to this region of Latin America and the Caribbean.