



**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 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**

Distinguished delegates,

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) welcomes this opportunity to observe the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We commend the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco for their firm and permanent commitment to ensuring that our region remains free of the most destructive and inhumane weapons in history.

As Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor Setsuko Thurlow said in 2017 when she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of our campaign: "The development of nuclear weapons does not mean a country's ascent to greatness, but its descent into the darkest depths of degradation."

We, the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, can be proud that no nation in this region has ever descended to such depths, and we can extol the role of our region in contributing to the path to ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

The States of Latin America and the Caribbean promoted the negotiation of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017, and our region is now leading the way towards its full implementation and universalization.

We are pleased that Mexico is presiding over the Second Meeting of States Parties, to be held in New York from 27 November to 1 December, and we stand ready to support the delegation in any way we can.

We congratulate The Bahamas on its recent signing to the TPNW and look forward to its early ratification. We also take this opportunity to reiterate our call to Barbados, Brazil, Colombia

and Haiti to ratify the treaty, and on Argentina and Suriname – which are now the only two non-signatories in the region – to become States Parties.

We also urge all non-States Parties to participate as observers in the upcoming Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW and make this a potential opportunity for them to sign or ratify the treaty.

In the face of the growing risk of the use of nuclear weapons globally, our efforts for the implementation and universalization of the treaty are more important and urgent than ever. As the States Parties to the TPNW declared last year: "We will not rest until the last State has acceded to the treaty, the last warhead has been dismantled and destroyed, and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the earth."

Civil society organizations, including the more than six hundred (600) that are part of the ICAN coalition, will spare no effort to advance this goal. We are committed to raising public awareness and sensitization of the commitments and benefits of the TPNW and the grave threat posed by nuclear weapons to humanity. We will also work to inform our elected representatives and the media about this issue.

We express our appreciation to the 26 States of Latin America and the Caribbean that have already ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ask them to consider ways to encourage the seven States of the region that are not parties to the ratification of the treaty. Achieving regional adherence will allow Latin America and the Caribbean to speak as one voice to urge all other States to ratify the treaty.

As Brazil has said, the TPNW represents "an evolutionary leap forward for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime" and "has significantly raised the moral bar against [nuclear] weapons."

Nuclear weapons, like other weapons of mass destruction, are internationally prohibited. It is therefore unacceptable for any State to possess them, and it is unacceptable for any State to claim protection against them as part of a military alliance.

The theory of "nuclear deterrence", to which a few States outside our region adhere, is not only wrong, but also dangerous. It fosters proliferation and undermines disarmament efforts. It's a little more than a mask to hide the horrific reality of what these weapons are meant to do: raze entire cities along with their inhabitants.

Once again, we thank OPANAL for inviting ICAN to participate in this important conference and our Guatemalan hosts. We look forward to seeing all the States of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons later this month, where we will be able to continue our fundamental work for a nuclear-weapon-free world.