



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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Statement by Jamaica

Your Excellency Mario Búcaro Flores, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala and President of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the OPANAL General Conference;

Other esteemed Ministers participating in this Conference, in-person in the beautiful capital city of Guatemala, as well as virtually;

Your Excellency Flávio Bonzanini, Secretary General of the OPANAL; President of the OPANAL Council;

Distinguished Ambassadors and Representatives of Member States and Observers; Distinguished delegates;

A very good day.

Jamaica welcomes the convening of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), at this time of particular instability in the world. I take this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. President and the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, the Secretary-General and his hardworking team, as well as the Technical Working Group for the successful staging of this Conference.

Jamaica takes due note, with thanks, of the reports delivered by the Secretary-General as well as the President of the OPANAL Council, which detailed the work undertaken by the Agency in the past year, and we extend commendations in this regard.

As a small island developing state, situated at the heart of the Caribbean, Jamaica does not take for granted the peace and security afforded in our region by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, well known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Fifty-four years ago, Latin America and the Caribbean became the world's first nuclear weapon-free zone,

in a densely populated area, when the Treaty entered into force. Today, Jamaica proudly reaffirms its support for the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the OPANAL and reiterates its full commitment to total disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. President, Jamaica commends the Secretariat on continued efforts to improve the inclusivity of OPANAL. Undoubtedly, the provision of simultaneous interpretation during Council Meetings as well as the Meetings of the Committee on Contributions and Administrative and Budgetary Matters is well appreciated by English-speaking Members of the Agency. We also note efforts to re-establish an OPANAL Coordination for Member States of the Caribbean and welcome further information on how this Coordination will function having had dialogue with Caribbean Members.

I also wish to acknowledge the Secretariat's efforts in the continuation of educational and training initiatives, which have exposed young diplomats and other professionals in our region to issues of relevance in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Jamaica has benefited from such programmes. Jamaica also supports the strengthening and professionalization of the OPANAL Secretariat for the optimal functioning of the Organization.

In closing, Secretary-General I commend you on your excellent stewardship of the Agency over the past year and the prudent use of its financial resources. I further reiterate Jamaica's commitment to the work of OPANAL, a unique organization, and support for its priorities for 2024. Profound appreciation is also extended to the OPANAL Coordination in New York, Geneva and Vienna for the work accomplished throughout the year. We look forward to an even more robust and relevant OPANAL in 2024.

Mr. President, thank you for your skillful chairmanship of this General Conference thus far. We are certain that with the support of your two Vice Presidents, all the remaining matters on the agenda will be adequately addressed in furtherance of our important work.

Many thanks.