**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JORGE DELGADO (URUGUAY) AT THE OPANAL GENERAL CONFERENCE 2018**

Mr. President, we greet the member and observers countries represented here today.

We would like to thank the Argentine Republic for having offered to host the General Conference this year.

As a demonstration of Uruguay’s commitment to OPANAL, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa, during his visit to Mexico in 2016, held meetings with Secretary-General Luis Filipe de Macedo Soares.

Likewise, on the initiative of our Foreign Minister, Uruguay hosted OPANAL’s first Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Course which was held in Montevideo last December.

It should be noted that Uruguay ran and was elected as a Member of OPANAL’s Council for the period 2018-2021, and that this past September 20, after 23 years, Uruguay returned to again chair this body.

We wish to highlight that this past July 25, the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations deposited at the Headquarters of the Organisation the instrument of ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

This Treaty was adopted on 7 July 2017 by the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons with a view to their total elimination.

By ratifying this agreement, Uruguay reaffirms its status as a peaceful, nuclear weapon non-possessor country and its firm commitment to the strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this regard, its adherence to the multilateral regulatory framework puts into practice a foreign policy that privileges and promotes the need to continue advancing negotiations, with the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament, under a strict international regimen.

Uruguay was the thirteenth country to deposit the instrument of ratification. The Treaty will enter into force once fifty States have done so, which will make this agreement a milestone in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and a privileged instrument in favour of international peace and security.

To end, Mr. President, our acknowledgement of Presidents Adolfo López Mateos (Mexico), Víctor Paz Estenssoro (Bolivia), Joao Goulart (Brazil), Jorge Alessandri (Chile) and Carlos Arosemena (Ecuador) whose initiative “with prompt and enthusiastic welcome” resulted in five counties of our Latin America issuing the first Declaration against the manufacture, import, storage or testing of nuclear weapons or nuclear launch devices, on 29 April 1963.

Thank you.