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**Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

*Agenda item on “Complementarity of the Treaty with the existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime”*

**OPANAL-AFCONE Joint Statement**

Statement by **Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini**

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

3- 7 March 2025

New York

*Thank you very much, Mr. President,*

*Distinguished Delegates,*

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), two regional institutions mandated to oversee the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Pelindaba, respectively. These treaties, establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa, are fundamental pillars of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and share a common foundation marked by historical pacifist advocacy, political determination to denuclearize their territories, and the promotion of peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Built on the legacy of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba, the TPNW is a landmark instrument that complements and strengthens existing NWFZs. Therefore, the States parties to the treaties establishing NWFZs have been instrumental in the process leading to the inception and negotiation of the TPNW; as well as its entering into force in 2021, depicting the complementarity of these treaties with the TPNW.

NWFZs directly contribute to complete and general disarmament, having set an important precedent for the TPNW as they recognise the need to eliminate such weapons as the only remaining guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances. Through the treaties establishing NWFZs, the world saw the first form of a legally binding international instrument forging a solid prohibition norm in densely populated territories of the planet and paving the way towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. With the adoption of the TPNW, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is enhanced.

Mr. President,

The complementarity between the TPNW and regional NWFZ treaties manifests in various ways:

1. Normative Strengthening: The TPNW consolidates the legal and political commitments already undertaken by NWFZs, reaffirming the total prohibition of nuclear weapons and reinforcing the illegitimacy of nuclear deterrence.

2. Universalization Efforts: the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba, faithful to its historical tradition, are fully committed to nuclear disarmament. Therefore, there is wide support for the TPNW universalization among the OPANAL and AFCONE Members. Currently, 68% of the TPNW signatories are countries from our regions. For this reason, we would appreciate this opportunity to encourage those states in a position to do so to conclude their ratification processes and adhere to the TPNW.

3. Cooperation and Institutional Synergies: OPANAL and AFCONE are committed to strengthening cooperation with the TPNW regime, including sharing best practices on verification, institutional mechanisms, and disarmament education. In this context, our shared path has been strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2021 that sets the basis for a constant, progressive and sustained long-term cooperation and collaboration between the two nuclear-weapon-free zones. Moreover, OPANAL and AFCONE are both fully operative agencies to ensure compliance with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, reflecting the crucial contributions of these zones to the advancement of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Mr. President,

In conclusion, OPANAL and AFCONE reaffirm our shared determination to work together, alongside States Parties to the TPNW, in advancing a world free of nuclear weapons. The complementarity between the TPNW and regional NWFZs is not only evident—it is essential for the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.