

**New Zealand statement to OPANAL, 26 November 2015**

It is an honour to speak at this gathering of the members of the very first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The countries of this region recognised the dangers of nuclear weapons very early - the Treaty of Tlatelolco opened for signature in 1967, predating even the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We in the South Pacific were the second, moving to create the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone through the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1985, thirty years ago this year.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have played an important role in encouraging regional peace and stability, promoting global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and reinforcing aspects of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation system itself. Part of the significance of these zones has also been their collective impact in generating an increasingly powerful norm against nuclear weapons, and in support of efforts both to contain their spread and to work towards their total elimination over time.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones are all different, but these very differences mean it is all the more important, and useful, for their members to share best practices and experiences.

- For instance, the Treaty of Rarotonga has strengthened provisions on environmental issues, particularly with regard to nuclear testing and dumping radioactive wastes.
- The Treaty of Pelindaba provides for strong commitments on nuclear security and the physical protection of nuclear facilities.
- The Treaty of Semipalatinsk of 2006 (establishing the Central Asian NWFZ) commits its members to strengthened verification measures through adherence to the IAEA's Additional Protocol.
- The Treaty of Tlatelolco has provided the model for all other nuclear weapons-free zones and is still the only one where the members have committed resources to a full-time Secretariat to advance the objective of nuclear-weapons-free zones.

New Zealand has had the pleasure of working closely for a number of years with Brazil in the UN General Assembly on a resolution recognising the contribution of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world and welcomes the fact that all nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Southern Hemisphere are in force.

That 174 of the 179 UN Member States present at the First Committee supported our resolution reflects the strong recognition from all parts of the world, including countries outside of existing zones (although not, alas, 5 nuclear armed states), of the constructive role played by nuclear weapon free zones.

Together we can move towards our shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.