



AGENCY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Communiqué by the Secretariat of OPANAL

The First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly convenes by Resolution L.41 a conference to negotiate an international treaty banning nuclear weapons

The First Committee (disarmament and international security) of the United Nations General Assembly adopted, on October 27th 2016, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/71/L.41 “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”. The draft resolution was sponsored by 34 Member States, 14 of which Latin American and Caribbean. The other sponsors States were 8 from Africa, 7 from Asia and 5 from the Western European and others Group.

The voting registered 123 in favour (70% of the present and voting and 64% of the total membership), 38 against (21% and 20% respectively) and 16 abstentions (9% and 8% respectively). Sixteen States (8%) did not participate in the voting (see text and voting sheet in annex).

Of the 33 OPANAL Member States, 29 voted in favour, 2 abstained and 2 did not participate.

Of the 5 nuclear weapon States identified in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), China abstained and the remaining 4 voted against. The four other States possessing nuclear weapons took different positions: the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea voted in favour, India and Pakistan abstained and Israel voted against.

It is worth noting that 6 States from the Western European and Others Group – Austria, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand and Sweden voted in favour, while 3 – Finland, the Netherlands and Switzerland – abstained.

The final voting in the Plenary is due to take place in December.

The Resolution, in its operative paragraph 8, “decides to convene in 2017 a United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”. Paragraph 10 determines that the Conference will meet in New York from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July, “with the participation and contribution of international organizations”.

The data indicated above show the leadership and cohesion of Latin America and the Caribbean on this matter, consistent with the pioneering decision of the Region, 50 years ago, to conclude the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

OPANAL, as the specialized body of the Region, pursuant the last three Summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and in accordance with the decisions by its own governing bodies, took an active part in the Open-ended Working Group which met during 2016 generating the ideas that led to the Resolution now adopted. OPANAL also participated in the First Committee, reinforcing the voice and determination of its Member States.

The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in the framework of the XXV Session of the General Conference of OPANAL and a high level International Seminar, on 13 and 14 February 2017, will provide an opportunity for the reaffirmation of the leadership of Latin America and the Caribbean in the efforts to ban nuclear weapons.

Mexico City, 31 October 2016.