



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

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**Inf.05/2016**

**Special Session of the OPANAL Council on the occasion  
of the visit of Mr Yukiya Amano, Director General of the  
International Atomic Energy Agency**

*Remarks by*

**Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares**

Secretary-General of OPANAL

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OPANAL Headquarters

Mexico City

Mr Director General,

It is an honour and a joyful occasion to receive your visit in the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although our Agencies have maintained contact in accordance with their mandates, it is adequate that their responsible officials have a direct acquaintance with each other's headquarters and personnel.

While IAEA representatives have participated in thirteen sessions of the OPANAL General Conference, this is the first visit of a Director General of the IAEA.

During the two years since I have been in charge of the OPANAL Secretariat I have not been able to visit the IAEA. Nonetheless, we participated in the IAEA General Conference in 2014 when the then coordinator for OPANAL in Vienna, Ecuador, delivered our statement in the general debate. We keep indeed at the IAEA a coordination for OPANAL Member States, currently exercised by Mexico.

In spite of our difference in size and functions, I might say that we belong to the same family of international initiatives aimed at preserving and enhancing the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and at barring the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The IAEA was created in 1957 with a positive agenda, but with an eye on the creeping proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its Statute is turned to favouring the development of the knowledge and technology in the field of nuclear energy. However, at the same time, the Agency is directed to ensure that its actions do not further any military use of nuclear energy.

OPANAL comes a few years after the IAEA in a different context, in the aftermath of the most serious menace of a nuclear conflict to date. The Treaty of Tlatelolco accomplished a very rare deed in International Law by means of the creation of a new institute that came to be known as “nuclear-weapon-free zone”. Chiefly aimed at the security of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty starts by assuring the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Moreover, it states, in an abundantly clear and lengthy way, in the seventeen paragraphs in its Preamble, the paramount goals of non-proliferation and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

One year later, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons established the political basis and the legal regime to prevent horizontal proliferation. The NPT also recognized the pre-existent and inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and determined the pursuance of negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

Instead of reinventing the wheel in terms of ensuring compliance, Tlatelolco had the wisdom of closely involving the IAEA in our nuclear-weapon-free zone. Of the thirty two articles of the Treaty, the IAEA is expressly named in articles 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 29. We are legally connected and we should keep a lively relationship. We should also bear in mind that, among the other four nuclear-weapon-free zones, only Pelindaba created a specific institution, not yet fully operational.

Regardless of its small dimensions, OPANAL is an international organization of relevancy not only in its fundamental role of keeping our Region free of nuclear weapons, but also in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education – a field dear to you – and in enhancing the expression of Latin America and the Caribbean’s views and positions for a world free of nuclear weapons. A recent example is the Resolution adopted by the OPANAL Council just three weeks ago on the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK.

The IAEA with its Statute, the NPT with its review cycles and the Treaty of Tlatelolco with OPANAL, are imaginative responses the international community devised to face the unprecedented menace brought about by with the invention of nuclear weapons and to promote the legitimate use of nuclear energy. These institutions are now around 50 years old and the unacceptable threat is still there unabated.

Tlatelolco and OPANAL are not a regional NPT. We have our own characteristics and nature, having so far inspired four other regions and hoping to inspire the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula in the same way.

On 10 October 1972, our two Agencies concluded a Cooperation Agreement as foreseen in Article 19 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is desirable to improve the implementation of said agreement in order to provide a closer collaboration between the IAEA and OPANAL for the benefit of Caribbean and Latin American countries.

In 2017, both, the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL, will mark their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an opportunity to strengthen the institutional bond between OPANAL and the IAEA. This institutional relationship is essential to maintain the military denuclearized status of our Region.

These are reasons to welcome your visit, which is also an opportunity for us to pay tribute to your performance as the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Thank you.