

**Statement of Jamaica to the  
XXIV Special Session of the OPANAL General Conference  
10 November 2016, Mexico City, Mexico**

Warm greetings to my colleague Ambassadors and Member State Delegations;  
President of OPANAL, H.E. Leonardo Arízaga, Ambassador of Ecuador;  
President of the Council, H.E. Enio Cordero, Ambassador of Brazil,  
Secretary General, Amb. Macedo Soares

On behalf of Jamaica, I take the opportunity to express appreciation to the Secretary General, the Council, and the Committees of OPANAL, as well as to Mexico for their special activist role, in the fine work accomplished and ongoing. In so doing I reiterate Jamaica's commitment to the course that maintains the Caribbean, and the wider Latin American region, as a Nuclear Free Zone of Peace.

In that regard too, I refer to a recent initiative proposed to the group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) Members at the United Nations, including Jamaica, sponsored by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies and Ambassador Alfredo Labbe, Special Envoy for Nuclear and International Security of Chile, regarding the feasibility of a Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The point was made that the LAC region is now totally free of HEU material as a result of Argentina's recent decision, announced at the Nuclear Security Summit 2016, that it had "minimized by down-blending its last HEU inventories". The intention seems to be to push this initiative via the CELAC framework, where the commitment would take the form of a political declaration rather than a legally binding treaty.

For Jamaica, germane to the discussion is the fact that last October 2015, Jamaica completed the conversion of the research reactor at ICENS, University of the West Indies, (UWI) Mona, to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel, which decreased our proliferation risks while doubling the reactor's utilization capacity. The removal of HEU to the United States of America ensured that the Caribbean region is now completely free of HEU.

The general position is that there is much in to commend the initiative so I take the opportunity to bring it to attention. Moreover, it would demonstrate the continued leadership of the LAC region on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues, which would be in keeping with the declaration of the LAC region as a Zone of Peace. It would also build upon the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment next year.

Finally, in the matter of Jamaica's contribution to the material operations of OPANAL, I would mention to further underscore our commitment the fact that our budgetary subscription has been paid up in advance to the year 2017.

*Embassy of Jamaica  
10<sup>th</sup> November 2016*