

STATEMENT BY H.E. RIYAD INSANALLY
AMBASSADOR OF GUYANA TO THE USA AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF TLATELOLCO
Mexico City, Mexico, February 14, 2017

Mr. Chairman

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Secretary General Luiz Felipe de Macedo Soares

Every anniversary is special but a 50th anniversary is, obviously, very special indeed. The commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Treaty of Tlatelolco is even more special in that it should inform attempts at the United Nations, to press ahead in 2017, with negotiations to effect a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons.

I have the honour to recall that Guyana ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco on January 16, 1995 and I am pleased to underline the fact that Guyana was before that date and has been ever since constant in its support of the nuclear non-proliferation agenda. Guyana, moreover, is a State Party to several related international legal instruments and, in 2015, our commitment extended to co-sponsoring a resolution entitled “Humanitarian Pledge for the Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”, which strived for the stigmatization, prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

In addition, during the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, Guyana voted, as we have traditionally done, in favour of the resolutions on:

- a. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty;
- b. A nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments; and

- c. United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons

More recently, at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in Santo Domingo, on January 25, 2017, Guyana endorsed the Special Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament which, inter alia, reaffirmed our long-standing commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a “Zone of Peace”.

Guyana, as a small state, has always, since our Independence in 1966 – we too have been celebrating our 50th anniversary – espoused a diplomacy of peace and we have always worked towards, in the words of paragraph 2 of the Preamble of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, “strengthening a world at peace, based on the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect and good neighbourliness”. These principles are all the more important in the world today and Guyana is pleased to note that they are reaffirmed in paragraph 4 of the Preamble of the Declaration we have just adopted and underlined by our collective commitment to the complementary principles of the “peaceful settlement of disputes... the non-use or threat of use of force... the right to self-determination... territorial integrity and... non-intervention in internal affairs”.

I close with the hope that one day there will be a universal legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, acquisition, transfer and stockpiling of arms and nuclear weapons. Until that day, we must stay vigilant to ensure that we give our children and generations to come a world which is free from such weapons and the fear of nuclear Armageddon.

By establishing, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first nuclear-weapon-free-zone in a densely populated area, Latin America and the Caribbean set a noble example for the rest of the world to follow. Even as we celebrate this achievement today, we know that there is no room for complacency. And even as we reaffirm our commitment of 50 years, we must redouble our efforts and continue our advocacy to make the whole world a nuclear-weapon-free-zone.

Mr. Chairman, it remains only for me to congratulate Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Macedo Soares on his well-deserved re-election as Secretary General of OPANAL, and to thank the Secretariat and, of course, the Government and people of Mexico for the excellence of the arrangements and the warm welcome extended.

Muchas gracias por todas cortesías y muchas gracias por su atención.