



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

Inf.08/2017

Check against delivery

**First session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the
Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Statement *by*

Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares

Secretary-General of OPANAL

May 2017

Vienna

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, I express to you our congratulations for your election as Chairman of the 2017 Preparatory Committee, greetings extended to the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat. OPANAL is prepared and willing to contribute to a successful outcome under your leadership.

Article 44, paragraph 3, of the Rules of Procedure of the NPT Review Conference grants the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - OPANAL the status of Observer Agency.

This Article specifically mentions two other international entities besides OPANAL, but it opens the possibility of participation to other intergovernmental international and regional organizations.

I am pointing out the reduced number of organizations mentioned in the Rules of Procedure because it shows there are very few intergovernmental organizations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

OPANAL has long been responding to this invitation, not only through the presence of a representative at the meetings, as today is the case of its Secretary-General, but also in a concrete way by means of information prepared by its Secretariat and position documents adopted by its Member States.

The Preparatory Committee of the NPT usually decides about background documentation for the Review Conferences and OPANAL is willing to present – as it did in 2015 – a document with complete information on the current status of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the activities of OPANAL.

In addition, we submitted in 2015 a document (NPT/CONF.2015/5) listing positions and resolutions of the Agency and its Member States concerning the implementation by them of a considerable number of actions included in the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan (Doc. NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)).

Thus we provided information, in an objective manner, on what OPANAL and its Member States did in relation to the decisions of the 2015 review cycle. Unfortunately, we lack a clear benchmark this time given that the 2015 Review Conference failed to agree on a final document. We do not dispose of a consensual appraisal of the five years prior to 2015 neither of a perspective for the following five years. This represents an unfortunate gap that should not be regarded with indifference.

Another contribution of OPANAL to the last review cycle was contained in a document (NPT/CONF.2015/WP.40) in which the Agency recommended 16 points that should necessarily be included in the decisions of the 2015 Review Conference.

This document remains essentially valid and it is expected to be revised by OPANAL Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

It should be noted that the impasse that led to the failure of the 2015 Review Conference had to do specifically with the nuclear-weapon-free zones issue, namely the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This shows how the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones remains generally relevant, applying not only to the Middle East. A zone free of nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula and in other regions has been frequently envisaged.

One of the essential criteria for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone is that they emerge from the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. No one questions this principle contained in the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines, but this does not mean that the creation of a new zone should be taken in camera restricted to the participation of States of the region concerned.

In the case of the Middle East, the 2010 action plan includes the participation of extra-regional States specifically identified. That was a decision taken unanimously by all Parties to the NPT. It is worth mentioning, as an example, that in the closing negotiating meeting of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in January 1967, 22 Observer States from six other regions participated as observers.

In our recent OPANAL General Conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco we were pleased with the attendance of the 6 States Party to the Additional Protocols and 34 non-member States.

Mr. Chairman,

We recall that, in 2015, the absence of results of the Review Conference was preceded, the day before, by a similar situation in the III Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. This raises the concern that the process of contact and collaboration between the nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia, which started in 2005, has stalled.

The Conferences of nuclear weapons-free zones and Mongolia are not a vague ritual of political affirmation but a means of strengthening the exchange of views and information among the nuclear-weapon-free zones. They are an element that can have a very positive impact in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation matters. No one denies that the creation of this institute of International Law 50 years ago and its expansion to other four regions has been one of the foundations of the non-proliferation concept and one of the most successful steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

OPANAL, through its 33 Member States, has been increasingly active in the international debates on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Since 2014, they issue annual declarations on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September).

On 14 February 2017, the Member States of OPANAL adopted a Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco which is the object of a document (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/2). of this PrepCom. This Declaration is not mere act of jubilation. It is a carefully worded and deeply thought text with positions that will be sustained by Latin American and Caribbean countries throughout this review cycle.

Thank you.