



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

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Exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other High-Level
Officials on the

**“Current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of
international organizations with mandates in this field”**

Statement *by*

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Secretary-General

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

(OPANAL)

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New York

Mr Chairman,

I wish to thank you and the First Committee for inviting the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to take part in this panel. I would also like to present my compliments to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and express my pleasure to share this rostrum with distinguished colleagues from other international organizations.

According to the document “Indicative timetable for structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security” A/C.1/72/CRP.2Rev.1, we are here to exchange views on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. I understand that it is not for me to use this opportunity to describe current activities and programs of OPANAL.

I would like to briefly present the views of OPANAL as expressed collectively by its Member States, especially as far as the year of 2017 is concerned, in two opportunities. The first was the declaration issued on 14 February, marking the 50th Anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). This text was circulated as UNGA document A/71/803; and also as document CD/2091 and in the IAEA as document INFCIRC/914; and as document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/2.

The second joint and unanimous expression by our Member States was on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September, the text of which will also have a broad dissemination.

I must stress that it is highly meaningful that a whole region comprising of 33 States find consensus on ample texts dealing with sensitive and complex matters. The two declarations I mentioned were carefully drafted and intensively discussed. In other words, the declarations by OPANAL Member States correspond to their real positions, being the common denominator of the region. We should also take into account that the Latin America and Caribbean region is a very diversified one in many aspects including from the political point of view. I mention this to show the important signification and dimension of these declarations.

Mr Chairman,

I take this opportunity to single out some of this shared concerns and positions:

First:

The acknowledgement that military denuclearized zones do not constitute an end in themselves, being considered as a means to guarantee non-proliferation and achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control;

Second:

As members of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, OPANAL Member States do not see themselves as having withdrawn from the international debate concerning nuclear weapons. On the contrary, they feel much more entitled to intervene and act taking as a basis the commitments they have assumed and have been faithfully complying with;

Third:

Member States of OPANAL have no doubt that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons are a violation of the UN Charter, a violation of International Law - including International Humanitarian Law - and constitute a crime against humanity. Consequently, Member States of OPANAL keep claiming for unequivocal and legally binding assurances against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Fourth:

OPANAL Member States believe that no security and defense doctrine and policy has to be based on nuclear weapons. Consequently, they express their indignation with the existence, as of today, of about 15,000 nuclear weapons.

Fifth:

OPANAL Member States reaffirm without reservation their commitment to the NPT, insisting on its universalization. They also demand that the conditions be promptly fulfilled allowing the entry into-force of the CTBT.

Sixth:

Member States of OPANAL warmly welcomed the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

I am aware that we should address the “implication of emerging technological developments on disarmament and non-proliferation”. I’m afraid that at this very moment, the contribution I can bring on behalf of OPANAL is a rather negative one. On the basis of the Declarations I mentioned, Member States of OPANAL are much more preoccupied with the development of technology for the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and development of new types of these weapons. They demand the cessation by nuclear weapons States of the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery systems, as well as related infrastructure.

From these points that I just selected, it is clear that the vision of OPANAL Member States concerning the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament is not a positive one.

However, they are not discouraged and our Organization, the sole international organization devoted entirely to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, shall continue to raise its voice and promote initiatives in our region and beyond in order to achieve the goal that I believe is shared by all States represented in this hall: the end of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.