



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

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**Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Signing of the
Treaty of Tlatelolco**

Statement by

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Mexico City
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I am delighted to open this panel discussion by recalling an appeal made at an OPANAL special session, in 2008, by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon: “We cannot afford to be complacent.”

Although 60% of UN Member States are signatories to nuclear-weapon-free zones treaties, the majority of the world’s population still lives in countries that possess nuclear weapons.

Thus, “we cannot afford to be complacent” about the threat posed to the South Atlantic by the approach of a nuclear submarine, “we cannot afford to be complacent” about the will to continue expanding the world heritage established by the five existing NWFZs today, in which the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL have been main reference for their “legislative” process; in political, legal and institutional terms. Clearly, the attainment of the final objective, focused on a military denuclearized world, still depends on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and also, on the successful negotiations of a universal legally-binding instrument on negative security assurances in the Conference on Disarmament. While the final objective remains a challenge, the building of interregional NWFZs, as if it were a “building Block”, seems to be the only available alternative since it has been conceived as a “dynamo” of non-proliferation initiatives.

Within this framework, the proposal to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East would imply taking a new and big step into the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation path, as it was highlighted at the IAEA Forum in Vienna last November; such opportunity allowed the evaluation and comparison of experiences acquired in all five NWFZs. Subject to certain singularities, their similarities are obvious, regarding their principles, verification instruments and benefits in terms of safety. That is to say, these five mechanisms, to a greater or lesser extent, have showed their efficacy; primarily, in the non-proliferation sphere where they are able to transfer their experiences from either - the current scope of their regional settings, or the historical perspective of the context that prevailed in the areas that later became their respective areas of application - to the Middle East. (Including other areas, Northeast Asia for example)

Therefore, I would highlight two focal points: the first one concentrated on the essence of NWFZs – in order to consolidate each zone into the process leading to general and complete nuclear disarmament; the second one, horizontally-oriented and based on the “Building Blocks” approach, whereby an effective orchestration around a common agenda can be achieved by the five NWFZs, agenda aimed to actively support global disarmament.

The orchestration of the five NWFZs is not a new aspiration, two conferences of States Parties to Treaties have been held for that purpose - Mexico (2005) and New York (2010)-. The third conference of these series, to be held in 2015, may have its first coordination meeting within the framework of the First

Session of the Preparatory Committee for the IX NPT Review Conference, from 30 April –11 May 2012 in Vienna. Considering that the convocation of the 2015 Conference began, inter alia, with the need to strengthen the coordination mechanisms among the five NWFZs, it is essential that every single one of them has a permanent body or executive arm.

Comparing the institutional experience of Latin America and the Caribbean with the rest of the NWFZs, we can conclude that it is the most fruitful, without a doubt, - not only in chronological terms-. Although the 45 years since the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the 35 years taken by the consolidation process of the NWFZ in our region are historical values in themselves and constitute one of the best collective political contributions of Latin America and the Caribbean, we must not forget that the mission of OPANAL has been one of the most significant contributions to the global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. Based on an efficacious international control system, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been able to guarantee the total absence of nuclear weapons within its territory of application; it has also reinforced the security of States Parties and has been successfully deterred.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that the mission is accomplished, it does not mean either that renewed efforts are not needed. On the contrary, the improvement of military denuclearization in Latin America and the Caribbean carries out an ongoing task; in which consultations with Nuclear-Weapon States - regarding interpretative declarations made at the time of signing and or ratifying Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty- play a key role in order for those interpretative declarations to be withdrawn or adapted to the current context, as it is different from the one at the height of the Cold War. Largely, Nuclear-Weapon States and International Organizations seem more worried about preventing horizontal non-proliferation than revitalizing the nuclear disarmament process.

Concerning such ongoing task, I would like to recall the need to maintain strictly valid the three pillars that have led the building and consolidation process of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean: political dialogue, transparency and mutual trust. A good and tangible example of these three pillars has been the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABAAC), as the IAEA Director General, Mr. Amano, has already noted.

In conclusion, the purpose of this commemoration is not only to look back and congratulate ourselves on the achievements of Latin America and the Caribbean over the course of four and a half decades, but also to thoroughly evaluate the institutional experience, serving a dual purpose of external projection and internal dimension. -External projection- in order to transfer such experience to different parts of the world, having the greatest possible impact, whether or not NWFZs are established in those areas; - Internal dimension – in order to improve the military denuclearization of Latin America. Equally, we should also reflect on how OPANAL Member States could revitalize their presence in the negotiation process inherent to the global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. In this regard, we should carry out a three-point path analysis or a three-point analysis of modalities of our region's impact on the pressure exerted on Nuclear Weapon States at the Conference on Disarmament: a) Firstly, to provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees against the use or threat of use of such weapons;

b)Secondly, to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to total irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament; c)Lastly, to maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests explosions pending the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.