



45th Anniversary
1967-2012

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

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OPENING CEREMONY
of the

**FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF
STATES PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES TO TREATIES ESTABLISHING
NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE ZONES AND MONGOLIA**

Statement by
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OPANAL SECRETARY GENERAL

Vienna, Austria
April 27, 2012

Mr. Chairman,
Ambassadors and Representatives of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Ambassador Alfredo Labbé, Chairman of the II Conference, for inviting me to participate in the First Preparatory Meeting of the III Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties Establishing Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia; I am unable to join you today due to personal reasons.

Mr. Chairman,

Seven years have passed since the First Conference held in Mexico City, and two years since the second Conference took place in New York City, in 2010. The Final Documents of both Conferences contain essential objectives and initiatives aimed at improving cooperation and coordination among Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. On the basis of these documents, it is necessary, in the coming years, to make progress in the definition and implementation of an agenda of common interests that contributes to strengthening each NWFZ and, to achieving the greatest goal of all, a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The task is difficult, but not impossible. It is important to take the first steps today. I believe the current international context and the relative dynamism of the NWFZs developed in the last three years offer the opportunity to outline the common agenda through concrete actions and effective coordination mechanisms.

There is still a long way to go; however, the progress in the last few years is visible. Let us recall some relevant events:

- The entry into force of the Treaties establishing the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in Central Asia and Africa in 2009;
- The establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy last year, which is required by the Treaty of Pelindaba;
- The progress made in signing and ratifying the Treaties of Rarotonga and Pelindaba; as well as the progress made in the negotiations between States Parties to the Bangkok Treaty and Nuclear-Weapon States (P5) in order to sign its Additional Protocol.
- The reactivation of the political agenda of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean; thus strengthening its agency, OPANAL.
- The participation of Representatives from all NWFZs in the IAEA Forum, held in November 2011, on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle-East and;
- The UN Conference on the Establishment of a Weapon of Mass Destruction-Free Zone (WMDFFZ) in the Middle East, facilitated by Finland later this year; a long-awaited event for the international community. The celebration of this conference is an achievement in itself.

Without a doubt, today is the day to strengthen the coordination and cooperation between NWFZs; especially, to promote the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt in order to support regional consolidation processes and; at the same time, all five existing Zones could work together and continue to share relevant experiences to the creation of a WMDfZ in the Middle East.

The great challenge is to identify the methods or mechanisms to make this possible; particularly if we consider that coordination between NWFZs becomes highly complex when implementing common agreements. Recently, I had the opportunity to share with some Representatives of Member States of other Zones, the idea of holding a NWFZs Seminar in 2013 or 2014 to reflect on relevant experiences and, to identify common interest subjects and the most effective cooperation and coordination mechanism. I believe that a Seminar or workshop has the advantage of being a flexible space for reflection.

Meanwhile, the 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean, have reiterated their conviction that it is necessary to build a joint leadership among the five existing NWFZs. To this end, the coordination of the III Conference should lie in the hands of a Member State belonging to another Zone, OPANAL will see this as cause of great satisfaction. I wish to express, in my capacity as Secretary General, our willingness to do everything in our power to assure that the next Conference is a decisive step in strengthening the relation between NWFZs and their common objectives.

Regarding the IX NPT Review Conference, I believe it is necessary to share standards and to reflect on joint positions, especially those that are orientated to support efforts towards total and complete nuclear disarmament; without ignoring the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. We are sure that this will be a subject in this and future Preparatory Sessions of the 2015 Conference.

In June 2011, I had the opportunity to participate in a session of the Conference on Disarmament, in which I expressed that NWFZs should construct interregional bridges, in order to move forward towards a world without nuclear weapons. Today, I am very pleased to share with you that the 33 Member States to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, adopted a Joint Declaration, in 2011, which was presented before the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, held on 11 October. In this document, they agreed, inter alia, “to support the exhortation of the UN Secretary-General in his Five-Point-Proposal on nuclear disarmament, in which he urges all NPT parties, in particular the nuclear-weapon-states, to fulfil their obligation under the treaty to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament.” In this respect, they also expressed “their determination to initiate the negotiations for a universal legally binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons; they committed themselves to joining forces in favour of the main objective.”

The NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and OPANAL are ready to work with other States, International Organizations and Civil Society organizations that share this final objective.

To conclude, I would like to thank in particular the Representatives of NWFZs Member States who joined us in February this year at the Commemorative event marking the 45th Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and also took part in the International Seminar: “The experience of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond”, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and New Zealand. I take this opportunity to reiterate our satisfaction for the participation of non-governmental agencies, such as: Majors for Peace, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, Soka Gakkai International, Peace Boat, Global Action to Prevent War, Nonproliferation for Global Security Foundation and the Monterey Institute for International Studies. The presence of them all and, the participation of the IAEA Director General, the United Nations High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs and, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; together with High Representatives of Signatory States to the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco: the United States of America, the Russian Federation and, the Netherlands; were very important to the success of the Event, which symbolized the revitalizing process of OPANAL and its political agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

My congratulations to you for the initiative in convening this meeting, I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.