



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

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**STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES
AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF
STATES PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES OF THE TREATIES ESTABLISHING
NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONES AND MONGOLIA**

Vienna, 27 April 2012

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), I would like to congratulate you for your election as Chair of the First Preparatory Meeting of the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of the Treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. Let me assure you of the full cooperation of the Group in the process that unfolds with a view to the Conference scheduled for 2015. We would also like to express our appreciation to the distinguished Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Alfredo Labbé Villa, for having deftly chaired the Second Conference in 2010. The past Conference has certainly been a step forward in consolidating this mechanism and the coordination among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.
2. The Group also takes note with satisfaction of the presentation concerning the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), as well as of the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives taking part at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean created by virtue of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the region—the Treaty of Tlatelolco—was the first one to be established in a densely populated area. As such, it represents a historical landmark and a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to regional and international peace and security, and to the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Treaty of Tlatelolco has been a political, legal and institutional point of reference in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other

regions and, at present, the Latin American experience represents, together with the other four nuclear-weapon-free zones, an important heritage of the international community.

4. GRULAC is convinced that the creation of internationally recognised nuclear-weapon-free zones based on agreements freely entered into by interested States, is essential to international peace and security, that nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthen the non-proliferation regime, and that they are a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament. It is for these reasons that the Group has supported and favours unconditionally the establishment of these zones in the world at large.
5. In this context, the Group is of the view that the legal provisions of nuclear-weapon-free zones treaties in force can be useful for future negotiations. Since the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the regions that have succeeded in the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones have drawn on past experience in order to refine and optimise the agreements. From the Antarctic to the Central-Asian Treaties, the international community has perfected these instruments turning them more comprehensive and having them better reflect the disarmament and non-proliferation requirements and goals.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States reiterates the need to make progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament, which remains the highest priority; to achieve the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction in an irreversible, transparent and verifiable manner; and to make the prohibition of such weapons a legally binding obligation.
7. It is for this reason that our Group deems necessary that nuclear-weapon States—as well as any other State referred to in the relevant protocols of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties not having yet signed or ratified such protocols—do so at the earliest.
8. Moreover, it is imperative that nuclear-weapon States having made reservations or unilateral interpretative declarations when signing or ratifying the aforementioned protocols withdraw such reservations or declarations. The reservations by nuclear weapon States to the legal instruments constitutive of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as their unilateral political declarations on negative security assurances, do not provide sufficient and unequivocal guarantee about their commitments to the denuclearised status of nuclear-weapon-free zones and, therefore, do not contribute to the effective and complete implementation of these zones. Such interpretative declarations undermine the legitimate right of non nuclear-weapon States to unequivocal and unconditional negative security assurances from nuclear weapon States.

9. GRULAC reaffirms its support to a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances that commits States with nuclear weapons arsenals to refrain from all use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non nuclear-weapon States.

10. GRULAC is convinced that the mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security and, ultimately, to the survival of humankind. The sole real assurance against the use of nuclear weapons or threat thereof resides in their complete elimination. In this regard, the Group is of the view that nuclear-weapon-free zones are not an end *per se* but rather an effective means to attain the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and stresses the importance of specific means and proposals to this end. In this regard, it is a priority that nuclear-weapon States commit at the earliest to the adoption of a schedule or, at least, of a realistic roadmap for the elimination of their nuclear weapons stockpiles, in the context of their obligations in respect of nuclear disarmament and international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The Group takes this opportunity to reiterate its demand for a complete ban of nuclear weapon testing, and stresses once more the need for universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in particular by nuclear-weapon States and those States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty. It is essential that all States maintain and abide by the moratorium on test explosions of nuclear weapons or of any other type of nuclear explosion.

12. July 2011 saw the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the agreements whereby Argentina and Brazil reaffirmed their firm commitment with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Twenty years have elapsed since the creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). Thus, political dialogue, transparency and mutual confidence turned into a central pillar in the strategic relationship between both South American States, with ensuing benefits in terms of integration and cooperation for the entire region and for the consolidation of the Tlatelolco regime and of OPANAL. The success of the Argentine-Brazilian experience and ABACC has been internationally reckoned and constitutes an example and a source of inspiration for other regions, especially those still lacking a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as well as a model for promoting mutual trust among neighbours on nuclear issues.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is essential that its three pillars—nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes—be pursued in a thorough and balanced manner.
14. The Group hereby highlights the achievements of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, that adopted a final document of substance and an Action Plan which is ambitious and comprehensive in nature. GRULAC expects this Action Plan to be fully implemented. We welcome the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, due to commence next week, and express our commitment to a fruitful debate at this preliminary stage of the NPT review process, so as to effectively implement existing decisions and adopt in 2015 the new decisions deemed necessary to contribute to nuclear disarmament.
15. Among the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference, the Group views with interest progress achieved in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in the context of a global political understanding that takes into account the security concerns of all States in the region. As we all know, the 2010 Review Conference has underscored the importance of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone where they do not exist, especially in the Middle East, and has agreed to convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. GRULAC considers that, as the instrument setting the legal framework for the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the Tlatelolco treaty constitutes a valuable referent for the Middle East. By allowing the States Parties to the treaty to follow different paths to adhere to its legal commitments, the treaty of Tlatelolco has shown the effectiveness of dialogue based on political will.
16. We welcome the decision to celebrate the conference in Finland, as well as the designation of the Finnish Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, as facilitator.
17. At the same time, we value the exchange of views that took place in the Forum on the Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone in the Middle East, held on 21 and 22 November 2011 at the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency pursuant to a decision by the General Conference in 2000.
18. We consider these to be all positive and constructive steps in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman,

19. The Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of the Treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia scheduled for 2015 and its preparatory process provide an opportunity to consolidate mechanisms for the coordination, cooperation and consultation among nuclear-weapon-free zones and to define an agenda and a working plan. In this regard, GRULAC supports the practice of holding preparatory meetings for the 2015 Conference, in parallel with the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, with a view to fulfilling the tasks necessary to attain the common goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
20. It is the view of GRULAC that effective political consultation and coordination among nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens the respective denuclearisation regimes. It is only by virtue of such mechanisms that States Parties and Signatories will be able to cement a joint leadership and work on initiatives and actions that are focused, sustained over time, and aimed at global disarmament.
21. GRULAC underscores the importance that States Parties and Signatories of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties engage in concerted efforts, and that they contribute to the negotiation of an agreement prohibiting nuclear weapons that is universal and legally binding. This should be the ultimate aim of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Group recalls the existence of a number of proposals to this end, including the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention.
22. The Group would like to conclude by reaffirming the unwavering disposition of the States Signatories of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to draw on and systematise good practices acquired over the four decades that have seen this important legal instrument in place. It will only be through a concerted effort among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and other relevant stakeholders in the international community and with the sustained implementation of goal-oriented initiatives that the world will stride forward toward global, total, irreversible and verifiable disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.