



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

(Check against delivery)

General Debate

67th Session - First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

Remarks by

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OPANAL Secretary-General

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to thank you for the opportunity to share with you the progress and positions of the Agency during the last 12 months, in relation to the theme of this Committee.

One year ago, I took the opportunity here to convey the revitalization process of OPANAL and its political agenda in the current international context. Those remarks included the 2011 Joint Declaration that OPANAL Member States presented to all Member States of the United Nations. This Declaration incorporate new regional consensuses, emphasizing above all the determination of the 33 States to join the efforts of the international community to move forward towards negotiating a universal legally-binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons. Today, this consensus is a guideline for the Agency's agenda, as well as the strengthening of non-proliferation measures. Both Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation are inseparable from OPANAL's work.

One part of the revitalization process is to continue to strengthen the Zone itself through concrete actions taken by Member States, and through Signatory States' compliance with their obligations under Additional Protocols to the Treaty. We therefore continue to urge the P5 to modify or withdraw the interpretative declarations made at the time of signing and/or ratifying such Protocols, especially those affecting negative security assurances. Although we understand that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee.

Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education is another mission of the Agency within the region. As requested by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), OPANAL submitted this year the Report on Peace, Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education 2010-2012, document that can be found on our website (www.opanal.org). Together with Member States we will continue to promote courses and other education and outreach activities. We are very willing to share these activities with other interested parties.

Mr. Chairman,

It is clear that Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones are not islands. Even though they are conceived as delimited territories, they are inserted into the international architecture of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Each Zone contributes to regional and global peace and security, at the same time, they incorporate themselves into this architecture through their own Treaties, and through other Universal Treaties, inter alia, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the treaties on Nuclear Safety.

In the same vein, I would like to reiterate that all OPANAL Member States are Parties to the NPT and 31 of them are now Parties to the CTBT. In January this year, we welcomed the news of Guatemala's ratification of the CTBT. Only two States have not yet ratified this Treaty, we will continue to work in

order for the entire Zone to be part of the CTBT as soon as possible. We also call on all States listed in Annex II to adhere to this universal instrument at the earliest opportunity.

We took part in the First Session of the Preparatory Committee of the IX NPT Review Conference with a strong hope that greater progress will be made in 2015 than in 2010. There are still opportunities for this to become a reality, but it is not without great challenges; such as bringing together today's diametrically opposed positions, even though all States express the same wish in their statements: to build a safer world, at peace, and free of nuclear weapons.

During 2012, OPANAL has collaborated with the remaining Member States to move forward in the signature and ratification of the Convention on Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism Acts and the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We acknowledge the efforts of Chile, Costa Rica and Colombia to organize this year's regional workshops for this purpose.

Likewise, the intrinsic relationship between OPANAL and the IAEA is an important part of this legal-institutional framework, relationship that was built on the very Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in 1967, by granting the Agency functions and powers over the Control System established by the Treaty to verify compliance with obligations undertaken by States Parties and Signatory States to Additional Protocols. During the last two years, the connection between the two agencies has been reinvigorated. The participation of Mr. Yukiya Amano, IAEA Director-General, in the Commemorative Event on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as the participation of OPANAL, inter alia, in the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety (June 2011), and in the Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the creation of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East (November 2011) has shown greater dynamism between both agencies.

We are pleased that Trinidad and Tobago has participated for the first time, as a Member State, in the IAEA General Conference held in September this year.

Furthermore, NWFZs are not islands between each other; they are also connected by bridges that have been built more clearly since 2005, when the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that establish NWFZs was held. OPANAL is pleased that Indonesia has agreed to Chair the Third Conference, this is the first time that it will be chaired by a State outside the Latin American and Caribbean region. We assure Indonesia's delegation of our collaboration, under their leadership, to take concrete steps towards the strengthening and consolidation of NWFZs and their common purposes.

Without a doubt, this is a propitious time 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 new NWFZs.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our confidence and best wishes on the holding of the Conference on the Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone or any other weapon of mass destruction in the

Middle East this year, in pursuance of the resolution adopted in 1995. We acknowledge the efforts made by Finland as Facilitator, we also reiterate Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, Under-Secretary of State, our very best wishes for the important mission that has been entrusted to him. Acknowledging that this is a sovereign process of the States in the Middle East, we are very willing to share the experience of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean. Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to discuss this matter and to reiterate our firm support. We hope that these States will begin, as soon as possible, the long and complex process that could lay the foundation for a stable and durable peace in the region.

To conclude, I would like to share with you that within the framework of the Commemorative Events on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, OPANAL Member States held the International Seminar “The Experience of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond” on 14-15 February this year in Mexico City. We would like to thank States from other NWFZs that took part in this important gathering; we would especially like to thank New Zealand, Indonesia and Kazakhstan. We would also like to thank non-governmental organizations of different countries, both regional and International. We acknowledge the participation of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs at the time, acting on behalf of the Secretary-General; of the IAEA Director General, and of the Executive-Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. We would like to highlight the presence of high representatives of the Signatory States to Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco: the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the Netherlands. The presence and participation of all of them, alongside Member States of the Zone, gave the commemoration a reflective quality allowing the renewal of OPANAL’s vision for the future.

This vision, as well as having an impact on all actions of the Agency, is permeated by the highest values and purposes: peace, security and wellbeing of our peoples.

Thank you.