



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

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PRESS RELEASE

- **Latin American and Caribbean States gathered for OPANAL General Conference, agreements on Education and Dissemination were reached**
- **A Working-Group is created to strengthen the Control System established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco**

States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) confirmed their continuing commitment to consolidating the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) in the region with concrete actions, and to working actively to create a world without nuclear weapons.

Representatives of these States gathered in México City to attend the XXI Special Session of OPANAL General Conference, on 13 November 2012. The main agenda items were the presentation of the Secretary-General's Annual Report, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda; and the creation of two Working Groups devoted to two different important themes: the development of new programmes on Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Education, and the offer of measures to strengthen the Control System that guarantees the denuclearized status of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ambassador Ubeda outlined the Agency's revitalization process, which started three years ago, she stressed that "the greatest contribution to institutional strengthening is the participation and empowerment of Member States in the most relevant activities of the Agency... therein lies the political strength of OPANAL." Ambassador Ubeda concluded by saying that "we have a revitalized Agency with clear goals, with a dynamic Secretariat General within an OPANAL that is large and fully committed to world peace and general and complete nuclear disarmament.

During the Session, with the presence of 22 Member States Representatives, OPANAL and the Latin American Institute of Educational Communication (ILCE) signed a Cooperation Framework Agreement; the Institute was represented by CEO José Luis Espinosa Piña.

Minister Juan Sandoval Mendiola, official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, chaired the XXI Special Session of the General Conference; Hon. Mrs. Patricia Vaca, Argentinean Ambassador, and Hon. Mr. Fernando Pérez Memen, Ambassador of Dominican Republic, served as Vice-Presidents.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco gave birth to the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone established in a densely populated area (1967); this initiative subsequently inspired other regions: the South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga, 1985), Southeast Asia (Bangkok Treaty, 1995), Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba, 1996), and Central Asia (Semipalatinsk Treaty, 2006); a total of five NWFZs comprised of 114 States plus Mongolia, all committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

OPANAL is comprised of all 33 States in Latin America and the Caribbean; its General Conference is traditionally held annually. Argentina will host the next Session of OPANAL General Conference in the City of Buenos Aires.

Mexico City, 13 November 2012.