



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

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PRESS RELEASE

- OPANAL presents progress report to the OAS on developments of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
- American States acknowledge OPANAL's work on regional peace and security

Mexico City, 17 January 2012. Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), presented a progress report on relevant developments of the consolidation process of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean (NWFZ), at the request of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CHS) of the Organization of American States (OAS). She reiterated that since 1967, when the Treaty of Tlatelolco was signed, the creation of the Zone has been a contribution to peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, it is a contribution to global Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation by being the first NWFZ established in a highly populated area.

The Secretary General emphasized that OPANAL is building a consensual political agenda that highlights, inter alia, Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, the strengthening of the Control System that guarantees military denuclearization of the NWFZ, and actions aimed at reaching a world free of nuclear weapons. The negotiations regarding the withdrawal of Interpretative Declarations made by Signatory States to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, when signing and/or ratifying Additional Protocols I and II, represent one of the Agency's most relevant actions as well as one of the most repeated pleas of the 33 NWFZ Member States at multilateral forums. Furthermore, Ambassador Ubeda stressed the importance that OPANAL Member States systematically continue to comply with their obligations under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

OPANAL, an intergovernmental agency consisting of the 33 Latin-American and Caribbean States, remains a benchmark of good practices and lessons learned for the rest of the NWFZ in the world, as well as for the processes aimed at creating new NWFZs, such as the one in the Middle East. Facing the current international scenario, where the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda has reemerged as a priority, OPANAL and its Member States have been working on the revitalization process of the Agency and its political agenda. The Secretary-General mentioned to the OAS CHS that this process, which started in 2010, has led to the incorporation of new challenges such as nuclear safety and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Following the address of Ambassador Ubeda, representatives from Costa Rica, United States, Canada, Peru and Brazil took the floor to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the Agency in favour of peace and security in the region.

The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) was created by the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1969 and has its headquarters in Mexico City. All 33 States in the region are Members of the NWFZ.