



Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in
Latin America and the Caribbean

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

S/BP/59 EN

PRESS RELEASE

- **The Treaty of Tlatelolco as a ground-breaking nuclear disarmament policy receives top prize**

Mexico City, 24 October 2013. The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, was yesterday proclaimed the winner of the **2013 Future Policy Gold Award** for sustainable disarmament thanks to its valuable contribution to regional and global peace and security.

Among the guests attending the awards ceremony, which was convened yesterday at United Nations Headquarters in New York, were high representatives from Member States of OPANAL Council and Mexico; including Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica and former OPANAL Secretary-General; Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN; and his counterpart, Ambassador María Cristina Perceval from Argentina; Minister-Counsellor Mónica Bolaños, from Guatemala; Counsellor Fernando Luque, from Ecuador; and Ambassador Jorge Montaña, from Mexico. Also attending the ceremony were Ms Angela Kane, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as high officials of the World Future Council and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

In her appreciation speech, Gioconda Ubeda Rivera, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica and former OPANAL Secretary-General, expressed on behalf of OPANAL Member States that *“the Treaty of Tlatelolco was an innovating, visionary, exemplary, inspiring and current policy. As it is said by the World Future Council, it’s a policy that has demonstrated that “when there is political will, there can be positive change”*”. She also added that *“It is very significant to receive this Award today because it coincides with a new stage described in the Preamble of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a stage in which the Zone is a means for achieving general and complete disarmament. We are currently working to make this global objective a reality. The Future Policy Award enhances this ultimate goal of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a goal shared by its 33 States Parties and OPANAL.”*

Prompted by the Arms Race and the 1962 Missile Crisis in Cuba, Latin American governments joined their wills to ensure that the region would never again become the scene of a nuclear conflict, and deployed their economic capacity and resources for economic and social development rather than spending them on building nuclear arms. These efforts culminated in the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) in a highly populated area and served as inspiration for subsequent NWFZs. In this context, Deputy Minister Ubeda highlighted that

“Today, half a century later, we can confirm that the political decision of OPANAL's Member States to declare themselves free of nuclear weapons, by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, has impacted five generations; my grandparents' and fathers', mine and the one of my children and grandchildren.”

The Treaty of Tlatelolco states in its preamble that *“Latin America and the Caribbean, faithful to their tradition of universality, must not only endeavor to banish from their homelands the scourge of a nuclear war, but also strive to promote the well-being and advancement of their peoples, at the same time co-operating in the fulfillment of the ideals of mankind, that is to say, in the consolidation of a permanent peace based on equal rights, economic fairness and social justice for all.”*

The Costa Rican diplomat concluded that *“actions in favor of general and complete nuclear disarmament are the best way to correspond to this Gold Award. Rest assured that we are doing it and that we will not rest until we achieve it. All of us together will make it possible to free the world from the threat of nuclear weapons. All of us together will make it possible to inherit this policy to our future generations.”*

Argentina's National Programme for the Voluntary Surrender of Firearms and Costa Rica's Abolition of the Army in its 1949 Constitution were the LA&C shortlisted policies which received the Silver Award and an Honourable Mention, respectively.

The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), based in Mexico City, was created to ensure compliance with the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is conformed by the 33 Latin American States, which are also Member Parties to the Treaty. OPANAL has worked tirelessly to promote total and general nuclear disarmament, as well as joint work with the existing NWFZs.

The Future Policy Award is the only award that honours policies rather than people on an international level. The World Future Council convened this year's Award in partnership with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). More information is available at www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fpa_2013.html