



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

General Conference

XXVI Session
7 November 2019
Agenda Item 6

Original: Spanish
Unofficial translation

Statement by Cuba

Mr. President,

Dear Secretary-General of OPANAL,

Distinguished representatives of the Member States of the Agency,

The celebration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, every 26 September, is an important initiative promoted by Cuba and the Non-Aligned Movement, of which our country is a founding member and to which it is proud to belong. This proposal, of great significance, contributes to the goal of preserving international peace and security, after it is 74 years since the criminal atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and humankind remains threatened by the existence of 13 865¹ nuclear weapons.

Cuba reiterates its willingness to work alongside the international community to strengthen and consolidate multilateralism, promote a nuclear-weapons-free world, and comply with the commitment embodied in the Charter of the United Nations “*to save future generations from the scourge of war.*” Nuclear disarmament cannot and should not be a continually postponed and conditioned objective.

Our country reaffirms the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination, taking into account the contribution of these technologies to the socio-economic development of nations. We reject the imposition of undue limitations to the access of nuclear materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes that are required by developing countries.

¹ The figure in 2019, according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), is 13 865.
<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/modernization-a-world-nuclear-forces-continues-despite-overall-decrease-number-warheads-new-sipri>

We should continue contributing to the strengthening of OPANAL as an appropriate legal-political forum in order to ensure strict respect to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In view of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there can be no greater aspiration for OPANAL than to contribute effectively and concretely to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and total elimination of nuclear weapons; tasks that must remain as high-priority in the field of disarmament. We express once again that their possession cannot be justified under any security concept or doctrine such as “nuclear deterrence,” which, far from contributing to nuclear disarmament, stimulates the existence of these weapons.

We urge nuclear-weapons States that made interpretative declarations concerning Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to withdraw them without further delay, in order to give full security assurances to the States that integrate the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. In that regard, we welcome the work undertaken by OPANAL to achieve that purpose.

Mr. President,

Our country is proud to be part of the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area and of the first Zone of Peace; as well as being the fifth State Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We also celebrate the increase of the number of States Parties to the TPNW, a sign of the commitment of the international community to nuclear disarmament.

We reject the decision of the United States government to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or Nuclear Agreement with Iran, and from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which undermines multilateralism, disarmament architecture, rules of coexistence between States and also causes serious consequences for international peace and security.

Mr. President,

Within the framework of the commitment of Cuba to the unity of Latin America and the Caribbean, nuclear disarmament, and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, our delegation has accepted that the XXVI Session of the General Conference of the Agency takes place at the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, as a gesture of goodwill towards the Secretary-General and the Secretariat of OPANAL.

The delegation of the Republic of Cuba also wishes to record that the decision to participate in the meeting at this venue does not prejudice our position regarding the Organization of American States (OAS). At the same time, we wish to reiterate our firm opposition to representatives of the OAS, or the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, attending the General Conference or having any impact on it.

Mr. President,

The Cuban delegation wishes to express its recognition and esteem to Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, for his work as Secretary-General of OPANAL.

To conclude, we wish to recall the words of who dedicated his life fighting for peace and justice and on many occasions highlighted the danger of Nuclear Weapons for the very existence of the human species, the Historical Leader of the Cuban Revolution, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, who stated at the United Nations General Assembly, on 12 October 1979: “Enough with the illusion that the world’s problems can be solved with nuclear weapons. Bombs may kill the starving, the ill and the ignorant, but they cannot kill hunger, disease or ignorance; nor the righteous rebellion of the peoples. And in the holocaust, the rich, who have the most to lose in this world, will also die.”

Thank you very much.