



General Conference

XXVI Session
7 November 2019
Agenda Item 6

Original: Spanish
Unofficial translation

Statement by Chile

Mr. President,

Since 1967 the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been an example for the world. The decision of our countries to ban nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, establishing the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region, has been a stimulus for the subsequent creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones. Since then, our region has been at the forefront of all those international initiatives in favor of the elimination of this type of armament.

This XXVI Session of the General Conference of OPANAL is particularly special, since it coincides with the 50th anniversary of this unique intergovernmental organization devoted entirely to disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that this is a unique opportunity to emphasize and strengthen the position of our region in disarmament and non-proliferation, always with the ultimate goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. President,

Although it has been more than 50 years since the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and also of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, unfortunately nuclear weapons continue to be a threat to the peace and security of all humankind. We note with regret that in recent years, nuclear arsenals have been revalued in doctrines and strategies of some nuclear-weapon countries. Chile condemns the improvement of existing nuclear weapons, as well as of the qualitative improvement of new types of these weapons and their launching devices.

It is essential that we do not forget the preamble of the Treaty that brings us together today at this Conference, where we established that nuclear-weapon-free zones are not an end in itself [sic], but rather an instrument to achieve general and complete disarmament. We are aware of the catastrophic effects caused by the accidental or intentional detonation of a nuclear weapon and, therefore, we believe that its very existence is a threat to international peace and security.

Chile has been emphatic that the total eradication of nuclear weapons represents a commitment to Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and that the responsibility for preserving international security corresponds to collective instances over unilateral responses. We support and are part of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and also the Treaty for the Complete Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President,

In this XXVI General Conference, this delegation avails itself of this opportunity to reiterate our full support to the work undertaken by OPANAL as well as the important work of its Secretariat in the expansion of activities in recent years. We appreciate its efforts to maintain a common position in our region regarding disarmament and non-proliferation, which is reflected in concrete facts towards the international community. An example of this is our declaration adopted by consensus each 26 September since 2014, on the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We highlight the contributions of OPANAL in the Preparatory Committees for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which the Agency presents position papers of our region on the subject and by which it gives an account of our responsibility to maintain valid, preserve and strengthen this international legal document that is the cornerstone of our disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We also welcome the recent participation of OPANAL in the First Committee as the only intergovernmental organization dedicated entirely to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

This delegation wishes to underline the efforts made by OPANAL in terms of education for disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We believe that the organization of the first four courses in countries of our region has allowed diplomats, military, journalists and other professionals related to these matters of receiving complete information and training on this subject, repositioning the problem that nuclear weapons represent. We believe it is important to maintain this role in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation education, reflected in the report sent by this Agency depicting the activities carried out in this field since 2014.

We also wish to highlight the role that OPANAL will play during the Fourth Conference of States Party and Signatories to Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in 2020. We appreciate the work undertaken at this headquarters and that allowed our region to have contributed with a series of suggestions that hope to improve communication and cooperation between these zones.

Chile reaffirms its commitment with the purpose that nuclear weapons will not be used again under any circumstances and, for this, the only assurance in [sic] their prohibition and total, complete and irreversible elimination within a clearly defined term. For this reason, we want to recall the leadership that the countries of our region have played in promoting the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and call for keeping our conviction to actively promote the elimination of nuclear weapons in all existing multilateral instances. Our countries have the authority and experience to do so, therefore we must maintain our commitment to seek all the alternatives that allow us to advance in the matter of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

I would not like to finish these words without paying tribute to Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, who concludes his work as Secretary-General of this Agency. Our country appreciates his personal qualities and his excellent work at the head of this agency, as well as his efforts to revitalize the role of OPANAL in the international arena.