



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

General Conference

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Statement by Jamaica

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Delegates, Staff of the OPANAL,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President,

Please accept our sincerest congratulations on your assumption as President. You can count on our full support during the Session. On behalf of the Government of Jamaica, I would like to express sincerest gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, for his years of service and tireless work in advancing the objectives of this august body. Your tenure, Sir, was one of distinction and we are proud to have had you at the helm as you seek to advance the region's vision for a world free of nuclear weapons.

We would also like to express profound appreciation to the Government of Mexico for hosting this important organisation and to you, Sir, and the entire OPANAL Secretariat for the work and the efficient preparation of this XXVI Ordinary Session.

Mr. President,

The adoption of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean serves as a pioneering moment in international disarmament. This year we are moved to take stock and to reflect on the progress made as we mark 50 years of OPANAL.

With the 50 years of existence of this international body implementing the Treaty of Tlatelolco, countless millions within the region have enjoyed protection and security from the threat of nuclear weapons. The Treaty, first of its kind, has also served as inspiration for the establishment of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones in the South Pacific, South East Asia, Africa and Central Asia.

However, while the region has had successes in the global advancement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, a great deal remains to be done.

Jamaica remains concerned at the slow pace of progress and the continued stagnation of the discussions within the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiating forum. Equally, we are alarmed, that despite efforts, there is continued reliance on nuclear weapons for defence and security objectives and that the estimated number of nuclear weapons still amounts to several thousand. These issues are further compounded by patterns of behaviour which seeks to weaken the global disarmament architecture and the continued erosion of the multilateral system, a vital ingredient for the attainment of global peace and security.

Mr. President,

Jamaica firmly believes that the success of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean is dependent on the political will and action of all countries, regions and territories, we simply cannot do it alone. In this regard, the region with its unique particularities as the first nuclear-weapons-free zone has a responsibility to further the cause of nuclear disarmament wherever the opportunities arise.

In this vein, we urge members of the region to enhance their advocacy and to mobilize efforts as we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Jamaica is of the view that the NPT Review Conference is an opportunity not to be missed as it presents the prospect for real progress to be made in furtherance of the fundamental goals non-proliferation and disarmament.

A strong, efficient and stable OPANAL is a well resourced one. In this regard, we urge those Member States that have not yet paid their contributions to do so in earnest. Further, we note

the outstanding matter of a physical space for OPANAL Headquarters and we therefore encourage continued discussions to bring a speedy resolve to this issue. A permanent headquarters is vital to the stability and efficiency of the Organisation.

Mr. President

In closing, please be assured of my Government's rock-solid commitment to the implementation of the Treaty, the work of OPANAL and all efforts to establish an enduring legacy of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.