



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

Secretariat

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UN General Assembly - First Committee – General Debate

**Statement by the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of
Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – OPANAL,
H.E. Ambassador Flavio Roberto Bonzanini**

H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly,

H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver, Chairperson of the First Committee,

H.E. Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of OPANAL – the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, I would like to express my congratulations and appreciation to you for your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. Allow me also to extend my greetings to the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat whom we thank for their dedicated work.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the previous Chair, from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for his contributions to this Committee.

Distinguished delegates,

This year we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations. The institution that settled the basis for a long-lasting peace and security, but also the one in charge to provide effective answers and solutions to the most diverse and global challenges. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the most critical. Although, the current pandemic has impacted and interrupted the normal cycle of international meetings and conferences on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we can also take advantage of this time to rethink our strategies and objectives in order to ensure the success of these conferences and advance towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world.

Aware of this situation, the 33 Member States of OPANAL issued a joint Declaration on 26th September 2020, on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as they have been doing so since the General Assembly established this commemoration.

This Declaration expresses the consensus of all the 33 Latin American and Caribbean States on the main aspects and priority matters concerning non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons, and also invites the international community to take further actions.

Distinguished delegates,

Besides serving as a permanent forum that allows the expression of common stands by the States Party, OPANAL is also in charge of ensuring the compliance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the effectiveness of its Control System.

The Nuclear-Weapon States and States administering de jure or de facto territories in the region concur for the full implementation of the Treaty undertook obligations thereon by signing and ratifying Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This implies respecting the military denuclearization of the zone and providing guarantees to the States Party of not being object of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, by means of interpretative declarations, which are in fact reservations, the commitments of some of the States Party to the Protocols have been limited.

Since 2016, OPANAL has been offering those States a way out of this problem, having proposed the signing of Adjustments which would eliminate misunderstandings and

provide full respect of the Treaty. OPANAL Member States are not proposing any new commitment from Nuclear-Weapon States other than a common understanding.

France and the Russian Federation have responded to our proposal of Adjustement, albeit in a flat negative fashion. The United Kingdom has not even accepted to receive the representatives of the five Member States of OPANAL Council to present our proposal. The United States of America has not provided any response.

OPANAL Member States urge these four Nuclear Weapons States to reconsider their approach and to carry out discussions in bona fide, with the aim to find a mutually agreed solution.

Protocols to other treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones have also been subject to reservations. Nuclear-Weapon States should be open to reconsider the scope of their reservations in agreement with the States belonging to nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Distinguished delegates,

The strengthening of the norm that establishes nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the main priorities of the Agency. In the last years collaboration and communication between representatives of the current existing zones and Mongolia have significantly increased. With this objective in mind, OPANAL Member States maintain a frank and fruitful dialogue in order to establish a formal and more permanent framework to strengthen further cooperation.

In that regard, OPANAL Member States hope that this 75th Session of the General Assembly take the necessary actions and decisions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the new date for convening of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, in accordance with the decision A/74/L.44, submitted by the President of the UN General Assembly on April 2020.

Distinguished delegates,

In these times of “a surplus of multilateral challenges and a deficit of multilateral solutions” – as the UN Secretary-General- has pointed out, it is time to mobilize efforts towards the world free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.