



General Conference

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Agenda Item 8

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Memorandum of Understanding between the OPANAL and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy

I. Introduction

1. On 28 and 29 August 2019, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) participated in the “International Seminar of Representatives of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones”, held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, with the purpose of fostering cooperation and enhancing the mechanisms of consultation among them. The event was attended by representatives of the 5 existing nuclear-weapon-free zones –Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific– in addition to Mongolia, as a state free of nuclear weapons; as well as officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and members of civil society.

2. At the 324th Council meeting, held on 28 January 2020, the Secretary-General informed that in follow-up to the “Seminar on Fostering Cooperation and Enhancing Consultation Mechanisms Among the Existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones”, which took place in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, in August 2019 and in which the OPANAL participated, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) expressed interest in strengthening collaboration with the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean through a Memorandum of Understanding. In this regard, on 29 June 2020, the Executive Secretary of AFCONE transmitted a Memorandum of Understanding proposal.

3. In follow-up to the said “Seminar on Fostering Cooperation and Enhancing Consultation Mechanisms Among the Existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones”, which took place in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan in August 2019, the Secretariat of OPANAL received the Counselor of the Embassy of Kazakhstan, Serik Surankulov, who reiterated the interest of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in subscribing a Memorandum of Understanding with the OPANAL.
4. At the 326th meeting of the Council, some Member States manifested their interest in creating a Working Group to negotiate the texts of the Memorandum of Understanding.

II. Working Group

5. The Working Group met on 24 November 2020, 3 March 2021 and 22 April 2021, and elaborated a counterproposal on the model of the Memorandum project presented by AFCONE.
6. The counterproposal of OPANAL was accepted by AFCONE with just one consideration, which was well received by the Working Group.
7. The final text of the Memorandum of Understanding was presented in the 330th meeting of the Council of OPANAL, on 28 April 2021 (Inf.25/2020Rev4), and it was decided to submit it for approval of the General Conference of OPANAL.
8. In addition, considering the interest of the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in subscribing a Memorandum of Understanding with the OPANAL, the Working Group prepared a draft Memorandum that takes up the structure of the Memorandum model with AFCONE. Said Project was transmitted to the Coordination of the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and is currently in the consultation stage among the States that form part of the Zone.

III. Considerations

9. It is suggested that the Memorandum of Understanding with AFCONE be subscribed on the date that the Secretary-General of OPANAL and the Secretary of AFCONE consider convenient.
10. In the case of the Memorandum of Understanding with the States that form part of Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the Working Group is pending the response of the counterpart. Once the text is agreed, it would be submitted to the General Conference to give the Secretary-General of OPANAL the mandate to subscribe said Memorandum.
11. The agreement with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) subscribed in 2003 is the only agreement that the OPANAL has with another Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Rarotonga Treaty, South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone).
12. The Memorandum of Understanding with other nuclear-weapon-free zones will allow to increase cooperation and dialogue among these with the purpose of continuing to strengthen the international regime created by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In addition to these two Memorandums, it is the intention of the Secretariat to dialogue, with the same purpose, with the Member States of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok) to complete the cooperation agreements network of OPANAL with the other four Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones.

IV. Recommendations

13. According to the abovementioned, the following is recommended:

- a. To authorize the Secretary-General to sign of the Memorandum of Understanding with AFCONE in the date that the Secretary-General of OPANAL and the Secretary of AFCONE consider convenient.
- b. To continue with the consultations with the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone to agree on the text of the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.
- c. To establish dialogue with the Member States of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone to explore the possibility of subscribing a Memorandum of Understanding.