



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

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Agenda Item 6

Statement by Jamaica

XXVII Regular Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America & the Caribbean (OPANAL) 30th September, 2021

SALUTATIONS

Señor Presidente,

Secretary-General,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Delegates,

Members of the OPANAL Secretariat,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me to begin by extending heartiest congratulations to you, Ambassador Carlos Tomada, on Argentina's assumption of the Presidency of this 27th Regular Session of the General Conference, as well as to Ambassador Mario Búcaro of Guatemala and Mr. Manuel Flores of Mexico on being elected Vice-Presidents.

Furthermore, I wish to convey Jamaica's appreciation to Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini on his tenure to date as OPANAL Secretary-General, in his advocacy for a world free of nuclear weapons, consistent with the provisions of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – Treaty of Tlatelolco. In addition, Jamaica wishes to commend the OPANAL Secretariat for its adaptability and efficiency in supporting the continued functioning of the Organisation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and for organising this very first virtual General Conference.

Mr. President,

We recall the vision of Alfonso García Robles for this Organisation and applaud the Government of Mexico for its continued support in hosting this Organisation. It is for this reason that we look forward to the outcome of the efforts of the Government of Mexico, through the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, to secure a permanent headquarters for OPANAL.

Mr. President,

The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which gave birth to this Organisation, continues to serve as a model for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones, a record of which the region can always be proud. Since the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a global nuclear disarmament framework has been established. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, (NPT), The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and more recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) signal a world more serious about nuclear disarmament. The latter has concretized the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons in international law, with its entry into force in January of this year.

Jamaica anticipates the next staging of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons, to work in earnest in strengthening the global disarmament framework. Nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy remain urgent objectives for our world today. We must continue to underscore those nuclear weapons are the most destructive and indiscriminate weapons ever created. The need for their total elimination is crucial to securing a future for people and planet. The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation cannot be contained and would cause massive death and irreversible long-term harm to humanity. We remain concerned that despite this reality, there is still a reliance on nuclear weapons for defence and security objectives.

Mr. President,

Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to advocating for total, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament under international control. We take this opportunity to reiterate our continued support for the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its obligations.

It is recognised that in order for OPANAL to carry out its functions most effectively, it must be a well-resourced Organisation. Therefore, we encourage all Member States to make their contributions.

In closing, Mr. President, please rest assured that the Government of Jamaica remains committed to the objectives of this Organisation and to increased cooperation with other nuclear-weapon-free zones towards achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.