



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

Secretariat

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Statement of

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and

Permanent Representative of Mexico to
the International Organizations with headquarters in Vienna

on behalf of

Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini

Secretary-General of OPANAL

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Vienna, Austria

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and in my capacity as Coordinator of OPANAL to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it is with great pleasure that I address the 66th regular session of the IAEA General Conference and extend my sincere congratulations to you on your election to preside over the current session.

Mr. President,

Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region in the world, by means of an international legal instrument, to establish a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area and undertake to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, opened for signature on 14 February 1967, was signed and ratified by all the 33 countries of the region.

The text of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in its preamble establishes “an inescapable necessity that nuclear energy should be used in the region exclusively for peaceful purposes, and that the Latin American and Caribbean countries should use their right to the greatest and most equitable possible access to this new source of energy in order to expedite the economic and social development of their peoples”.

In this regard, the cooperation and coordination between OPANAL and the IAEA are essential for the operation of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as for the effectiveness of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The IAEA-OPANAL Cooperation Agreement, signed on October 3, 1972, at the 16th Session of the IAEA General Conference held in Mexico City, has served as a framework for the collaboration between OPANAL and the IAEA with a view towards harmonizing our efforts to facilitate the efficient operation of the Control System.

The Control System established by the Treaty is implemented by the Contracting Parties with the execution of both the IAEA and OPANAL, and has the purpose of verifying that none of the activities prohibited by the Treaty of Tlatelolco are carried out in the territory of the

Contracting Parties, and that the nuclear energy programs are used exclusively for peaceful purposes. For this aim, Article 13 of the Treaty compels the Contracting Parties to negotiate multilateral or bilateral agreements with the IAEA for the application of safeguards to their nuclear activities. Currently, all 33 countries represented in the Latin America and Caribbean region have safeguards agreements in force with the IAEA.

Mr. President,

OPANAL is greatly concerned by the nuclear safety and security situation in Eastern Europe, particularly with regards to the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, Zaporizhzhia, which, if the circumstances continue to deteriorate, poses a risk of a nuclear disaster that could endanger the health and safety of people and the environment in the region. OPANAL therefore fully endorses the efforts of the IAEA and its Director General Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi to resolve this situation by providing technical support in the areas of nuclear safety, security and safeguards implementation.

Mr. President,

The nuclear law represents a legal framework for conducting activities of the safe, secure, and peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, and has been a key area of international law that requires a further development. That is why OPANAL congratulates Director General Grossi for his timely initiative to convene earlier this year the First International Conference on Nuclear Law, that served as an international forum for representatives from governments, non-governmental and international organizations, including OPANAL, and many others, to discuss current topical issues.

To conclude, Mr. President, as the creators of the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area, OPANAL Member States are committed to continue working on strengthening of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. For this, OPANAL expresses its full support to the IAEA in promoting trust and cooperation around the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and looks forward to maintaining a strong relationship between the two agencies.

I thank you.