



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

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**International Atomic Energy Agency
61st General Conference**

Statement *by*

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Secretary-General

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in

Latin America and the Caribbean

(OPANAL)

Delivered *by*

**The Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the International Organizations based in
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Coordinator of OPANAL in Vienna

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Mr/Mme Chair,

On behalf of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), I express the warmest congratulations to you for your election as Chair of the 61st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Please, let me also extend my appreciation to Mr. Yukiya Amano for the excellent work as Director General of the IAEA.

Mr/Mme Chairman,

The core provisions of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) are contained in its Article 1 and include two main aspects: the obligation to use exclusively for peaceful purposes the nuclear material and facilities which are under the jurisdiction of the States Party and the prohibition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons, by the Parties themselves, directly or indirectly, on behalf of anyone else or in any other way.

In order to ensure compliance with its obligations, the Treaty of Tlatelolco establishes a Control System which is put into effect by the Contracting Parties with the participation of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

OPANAL, as the institution specifically created by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, has a central coordinating role regarding the Control System. In accordance with Article 14 of the Treaty, OPANAL receives and systematizes compliance by means of the semi-annual reports in which the Parties notify that “no activity prohibited under this Treaty has occurred in their respective territories.” Moreover, through its three main bodies – the General Conference, the Council and the Secretariat – OPANAL is a political and intergovernmental forum where the Parties hold periodic and extraordinary consultations on the purposes, measures, and procedures set forth in the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The IAEA's role is focused on the technical aspect of the Control System established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In accordance with Article 13, the Parties to the Treaty undertake to negotiate multilateral or bilateral agreements with the IAEA for the application of safeguards to their nuclear activities. All the 33 States Party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco have concluded safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

In accordance with Article 12 and 16 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and in conformity with the safeguards agreements concluded by the Parties, the IAEA has the power to carry out special inspections at the request of any Party, with the authorization of the Council of OPANAL and through the Secretary-General of the Agency. Up until now, these inspections have never been needed, but they are an important mechanism to be used if necessary.

Mr/Mme Chair,

During the negotiation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the States of Latin America and the Caribbean foresaw that the future Control System of the instrument would require an organic relationship with the IAEA.

On 3 October 1972, OPANAL and the IAEA signed a cooperation agreement in accordance with Article 19 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. I recall that this agreement was signed during the 16th session of the General Conference of the IAEA, held in Mexico City, where the Treaty of Tlatelolco was opened for signature on 14 February 1967.

The specific role of OPANAL and the IAEA, as well as their coordination, is essential for the functioning of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. The subsequent nuclear-weapon-free zones have also developed an effective link with the IAEA to verify compliance with non-proliferation.

Mr/Mme Chair,

The continuous and effective operation of OPANAL for nearly 50 years and its role as a political forum give the Agency an active voice for demanding nuclear disarmament at the global level.

By means of their special declarations on nuclear disarmament, the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) have designated OPANAL as the “specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament”.

In spite of set-backs and rigid positions from the part of nuclear armed States, the vast majority of the Member States of the United Nations have not slackened their efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. We celebrate the opening for signature, on 20 September in New York, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the effective operation of which will demand an important participation of the IAEA. For the Caribbean and Latin American countries, this prohibition has been fully in force in the Region at least from the moment all of them became Parties a quarter of a century ago. What we envisage and strive for is that this situation be extended to the whole world.

Thank you.