



OPANAL

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

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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

September 2025

Vienna, Austria

Mr./Ms. Chair,

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 in Vienna, I am honored to address the 69th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and extend my warmest congratulations to you on your election to preside over the current session.

Mr./Ms. Chair,

Latin America and the Caribbean proudly continues to lead by example in the global efforts to ensure that nuclear energy is used solely for peaceful purposes. The Treaty of Tlatelolco — adopted in 1967 — was the first legally binding international instrument to establish a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated region. Today, it remains a backbone of our region's identity and enduring commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

The long-standing cooperation between OPANAL and the IAEA — established through the 1972 Cooperation Agreement — has been instrumental in realizing this commitment. Through a robust verification and control system — based on the Treaty and complemented by IAEA safeguards — the region has developed one of the most transparent and accountable nuclear governance architectures in the world.

Every Contracting Party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco maintains a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA — many of them further strengthened by an Additional Protocol or by bilateral mechanisms like the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). These instruments provide strong assurance that all nuclear material and activities in the region are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Mr./Ms. Chair,

OPANAL remains deeply concerned by the increasing threats to the safety and security of nuclear facilities in various parts of the world. We echo the clear and repeated warnings of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi that nuclear facilities must never be the object of military action, regardless of the circumstances. Such acts pose significant risks to public health, environmental integrity, nuclear safety and security, and threaten both regional and international peace and stability. These developments underscore the urgent need to uphold and strengthen the long-standing norms and legal principles that protect nuclear facilities dedicated to peaceful purposes.^{1 2}

We commend the Director General for his steadfast leadership and the professionalism of the IAEA team in responding swiftly and responsibly to potential nuclear emergencies. Their continued vigilance and commitment to nuclear safety and security are of paramount importance in these challenging times.

At the same time, OPANAL acknowledges the transformative role of nuclear science and technology in promoting sustainable development. Initiatives such as *Rays of Hope* and *Atoms4Food* illustrate the IAEA's crucial contribution to improving health outcomes and strengthening food security, particularly in developing regions. We commend these efforts and support the Director General's vision to broaden access to peaceful nuclear applications, while upholding the highest standards of safety, security, and non-proliferation.

Mr./Ms. Chair,

As a regional body that shares common values and goals with the IAEA, OPANAL reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the close and productive relationship between our

¹ Statement of the IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi on the Situation in Iran - <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/statement-on-the-situation-in-iran-13-june-2025>

² Statement of the IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi on the Situation in Ukraine - <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-303-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

two organizations. This cooperation remains a key pillar for advancing nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming that the Treaty of Tlatelolco stands as a testament to what can be achieved when trust, multilateralism, and legally binding commitments are united in the pursuit of peace. Building on this foundation, OPANAL looks forward to deepening its collaboration with the IAEA, particularly through regional initiatives that enhance safeguards implementation, harmonize nuclear legislation, and strengthen technical capacities. We will continue to work closely with the IAEA to ensure that all States in the region can benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in a safe, secure, and responsible manner.

Thank you.