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## Information Circular

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# Communication of 23 February 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Guatemala concerning the Declaration by the Member States of OPANAL on the 50th Anniversary of the Conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco

1. The Director General has received a communication dated 23 February 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the Agency, in its capacity as coordinator of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), attaching the Declaration by the Member States of OPANAL on the 50th anniversary of the Conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

2. As requested, the Note Verbale and the Declaration by the Member States of OPANAL on the anniversary of the Conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco are herewith circulated for the information of all Member States.

Embassy of Guatemala in Austria  
Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations  
and international organizations in Vienna

REF.:148.17

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guatemala, in its capacity as coordinator of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), presents its compliments to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has the honour to refer to the Declaration by the Member States of OPANAL on the 50th anniversary of the Conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

The Mission would like to request that the Secretariat kindly publish this declaration as an Information Circular, to bring it to the attention of the Member States at the meetings of the Board of Governors starting 6 March 2017.

The Permanent Mission of Guatemala, in its capacity as coordinator of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), avails itself of this opportunity to assure the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency of its highest consideration.

Vienna, 23 February 2017

(signed) (stamp)

Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)  
VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

**Declaration by the Member States of OPANAL on the 50th Anniversary of the Conclusion of the  
Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean  
(Treaty of Tlatelolco)**

The Latin American and Caribbean Contracting Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), represented by their foreign ministers, who gathered on 14 February 2017 in Mexico City for the 25th Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Tlatelolco Treaty,

*Aware* that Latin America and the Caribbean, in a complex political situation that made evident the advantages of military denuclearization, succeeded in drafting a treaty without precedent for international peace and security that simultaneously ensured that the region would be free of nuclear weapons and that nuclear energy would be used there exclusively for peaceful purposes, including, inter alia, those pursued at centres for research in medicine and nutrition,

*Proud* of the historic responsibility attendant on being part of the “Zone of Peace” that was first proclaimed in Latin America and the Caribbean at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 29 January 2014,

*Recalling* their decision to contribute towards strengthening a world at peace, based on the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect and good neighbourliness, peaceful resolution of disputes, rejection of the use of force and threats of the use of force, the right to self-determination and territorial integrity, and non-intervention in internal affairs,

*Reiterating* that militarily denuclearized zones are not an end in themselves but rather represent a very important intermediate step towards nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

*Reiterating their conviction* that the establishment of militarily denuclearized zones is closely linked with the maintenance of peace and security in the respective regions and that the military denuclearization of vast geographical zones, adopted by the sovereign decision of the States comprised therein, has exercised a beneficial influence on other regions,

*Recalling* that the General Assembly of the United Nations, in resolution 68/32, decided to “convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard”,

*Further recalling* the celebration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September as part of global efforts towards achieving the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, and *urging* governments, parliaments and civil society to take additional action each year for the celebration of this day,

*Emphasizing once again* that nuclear weapons, whose terrible effects are suffered, indiscriminately and inexorably, by military forces and civilian population alike, constitute, through the persistence of the radioactivity they release, an attack on the integrity of the human species and ultimately may even render the whole earth uninhabitable,

*Recalling likewise* the conferences on the human impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit and Vienna in 2014, which confirmed that nuclear weapons pose a threat to humanity by their mere existence; by the possibility of their use or threat of their use; by virtue of the damage that an accidental or intentional nuclear explosion could cause, inter alia, to global health, food security and the climate; and by virtue of the international community’s lack of capacity to address a humanitarian disaster of that magnitude,

*Recognizing* also multilateral efforts currently under way to seek out and identify effective measures that would need to be undertaken in order to create and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons,

*Reiterating* that, while the nuclear-weapon States are ultimately responsible for eliminating their nuclear arsenals, it is the responsibility of all States to forestall the humanitarian impact and all other effects of nuclear weapons,

*Reaffirming* that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and a crime against humanity,

*Considering* also that the only truly effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is to prohibit and eliminate them in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within clearly defined time frames,

*Recalling* that the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its first session, approved on 24 January 1946 its first resolution, A/RES/1(I), which dealt primarily with the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction,

*Welcoming* the adoption by the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations of resolution 71/258, in which it decided, inter alia, “to convene in 2017 a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”,

*Calling attention* to the commemorative plaque unveiled on 18 November 2016 with the inscription: “Here, in Tijuana, the most northwestern municipality of all Latin America, begins the Nuclear Free Zone of Latin America and the Caribbean, which extends to the farthest southern extreme of the Continent. As established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967, within this 80 million square kilometre region there are no nuclear weapons nor will there ever be”,

The Contracting Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which are all Members of OPANAL,

1. *Reiterate* their grave concern that the existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose an imminent threat to peace and security on our planet, and therefore *consider* it to be in the interest of all that nuclear weapons never be used again under any circumstances;
2. *Recall* OPANAL’s role as “specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament”, as formulated in the special declarations on nuclear disarmament approved by the Heads of State and Government at the CELAC Summits in Cuba in 2014, in Costa Rica in 2015 and in Ecuador in 2016;
3. *Reaffirm*, pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States, including all OPANAL Member States, in receiving from the nuclear-weapon States unequivocal and legally binding assurances not to use or threaten to use such weapons against them, and *likewise urge* that efforts be made to negotiate and adopt at the earliest possible date a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances;
4. *Urge* the nuclear-weapon States that have issued interpretive declarations concerning Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco that are contrary to the spirit of the Treaty to examine them with OPANAL with a view to revising or withdrawing them, so as to provide full and unequivocal security assurances to the States making up the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean and to respect the militarily denuclearized status of the region;
5. *Underscore* that nuclear-weapon-free zones promote regional and international peace and stability by prohibiting the possession, acquisition, development, testing, manufacture, production, storage, deployment and use of nuclear weapons;
6. *Highlight* that the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, has been a source of inspiration to four other regions of the world, and *consider also* that the Treaty and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) are of lasting value to the international community and, at the same time, are a political, legal and institutional model for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned;

7. *Regret* the failure to honour the agreement to convene an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, *reiterate* that the convening of that conference was an important and integral part of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference [1], and therefore *urge* that this conference be held as soon as possible, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States;
8. *Regret* the ongoing failure by the nuclear-weapon States to implement Article VI of the NPT and fulfil the commitments deriving from the NPT Review Conferences, and *regret also* that the 2015 NPT Review Conference concluded without adopting a final document;
9. *Condemn* the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of these weapons, as such acts are inconsistent with the obligation to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament and, in that context, *demand* that the nuclear-weapon States stop the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and associated infrastructure;
10. *Note with satisfaction* that July 2016 marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the agreements through which Argentina and Brazil affirmed their unequivocal commitment to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy and established the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), and *highlight* that the successful experience of Argentina and Brazil and ABACC has been recognized internationally and serves as an inspiring example for other regions of the world, in particular those in which there is as yet no nuclear-weapon-free zone;
11. *Underscore* the importance of cooperation among the States party to the Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Central Asian treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia;
12. *Re-emphasize* that a world free of nuclear weapons is essential to achieving humanity's most important goals, namely, peace, security and development, and therefore *consider* that the next action required is for all Member States of the United Nations to take active part in the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which is to be convened in accordance with resolution 71/258 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.