



NATIONAL PROHIBITION AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONES. THE GEOGRAPHY OF A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

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Dear authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Members of parliaments and friends

It is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to participate in this International Conference which is also celebrating two important dates: On one hand this beautiful country that is receiving us today is commemorating its 25 years as the independent Republic of Kazakhstan, therefore I would like to start by congratulating all its citizens on behalf of all the member parliaments of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) Latin American and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC), which I have the responsibility to represent. On the other hand, it is 25 years since the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, where during decades countless of test explosions took place leaving a vast deserted area and also victims of atomic radiation.

Since the declaration of independence, Kazakhstan, under the leadership of its President Nursultan Nazarbayev, assumed a decisive peaceful call in favor of a total nuclear disarmament that led not only to the eradication of soviet origin atomic weapons left in the territory but also to an active multilateral foreign policy during disarmament and non proliferation forums whose best outcome is the creation of the first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone fully located in the northern hemisphere: the Central Asia Zone, which was created by the Treaty of Semipalatinsk signed in September 2006 in that same scenario where the “balance of terror” took place.

The aim that gathers us today is a long term objective but no less urgent. Having a nuclear weapons free world is a global security need as long as such mass destruction weapons jeopardize the survival of the humanity on Earth. Today we have to incorporate to the hypothesis of a potential nuclear conflict amongst the States, the risk involved in the potential possession of nuclear material or weapons by terrorist groups. Or even the malicious manipulation through cyber



terrorism of the command and guidance systems of nuclear warhead missiles.

I want to greet the leadership showed by Kazakhstan when moving ahead in the establishment along with its peers in Central Asia of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone located in a vast extension of land in the most populated continent on earth. I make this compliment from my own region, Latin America and the Caribbean, who for more than 50 years when nuclear deterrence strategy seemed impossible to destroy during the harshness of the Cold War, started a process that ended in the Tlatelolco Treaty.

Actually, in response to the alert caused in 1962 by the “missile crisis” in Cuba, all Latin American countries understood how urgent was to keep our region out of the nuclear race by banning all nuclear weapons from our geographic territory. From the Joint Statement signed by the Presidents of Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador we were able, in less than four years, to sign the first treaty to establish a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone embracing a territory over the 20 million square kilometers and 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries, where more than 600 million people live.

The Treaty, apart from legally prohibiting the use, test, store or deployment of any type of nuclear weapon, set its own monitoring mechanism through a specific international agency, the **Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL)**.

At the same time, and following a strategy taken from a tool of the International Law on Disarmament, Tlatelolco expressly acknowledged the right every country has to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes with no discrimination whatsoever.

This international tool is a full non restriction and indefinite commitment all the countries of the region accept with the aim of prohibiting nuclear menace. In order to make it fully efficient, it was necessary to obtain the legal commitment of the “nuclear powers” acknowledged by the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to have them strictly respect the Latin America and the Caribbean nuclear weapons free zone by-laws set in the Additional Protocols to the treaty of Tlatelolco.

I can proudly say in representation of the GRULAC that our countries have honored the will expressed in Tlatelolco, which powerfully inspired the process that would later end in the Treaty on Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has a global scope but keeps a discriminatory situation when makes a difference between Nuclear



Armed Countries and Non Nuclear Weapons States, setting a full and complete nuclear disarmament in an indeterminate future.

Our experience in Latin America has served as a reference for the establishment of the other four nuclear weapons free zones existing in the world today, including Central Asia as well as for the launching of the Conference of the State Parties on Treaties setting the Nuclear Weapons Free Zones. The next step in compliance with the agreed in 1995 during the NPT Review and Extension Conference is the enshrinement of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and Other Mass Destruction Weapons in the Middle East. From OPANAL there has always been the will to cooperate, sharing its learnt experiences and the good practices with the aim of contributing to the common objective, which is to have a world free from nuclear weapons.

The Heads of States and Government of the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States consistent with their call for peace in our region adopted in January of this year in Quito a Special Declaration, the number 21 where they commit with ***the beginning of a multilateral diplomatic process for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.*** Such multilateral diplomatic process is matter of discussion right now at the United Nations General Assembly and it could mean a new chapter in the attempt to release the world from nuclear weapons. It is in this context that we hope that no further than 2018 a Diplomatic Conference is held and open to all member states of the United Nations where the Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean can show the leadership displayed in the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Semipalatinsk.

In 1963, when the process that would lead to Tlatelolco was in its early stages, the Mexican ambassador Mr. Alfonso Garcia Robles, Peace Nobel Prize in 1982, and one of the main persons behind the Treaty of Tlatelolco said at the United Nations General Assembly: “Today Latin America is in its way to denuclearization starting with the historic resolution this Assembly has passed. We are sure that this path sooner or later, at a long or short term, will reveal itself as uncontrollable because it has the enthusiastic and unrestricted support of all the peoples”.

More than 50 years later, this process continues its progress in all regions of the world. I am proud our countries are not only the standard-bearers of a cause supporting International Peace and Security but also bridge builders and creators of emotional links that are shared in all the countries that have a commitment with the progress of Humankind.



Thank you very much