

## Remarks to the OPANAL Council

By

*Sergio Duarte*

High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

United Nations

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I am very grateful for this honour to address the OPANAL Council. I wish to pay my personal respects to the members of the OPANAL Council and its Secretary General for their many contributions both in promoting the goals of the Tlatelolco Treaty and, more generally, in strengthening international peace and security as a result.

Last August, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed an Extraordinary Session of OPANAL. This was only the second time that a Secretary-General had addressed OPANAL, and it is quite fitting that the Secretary-General would be returning here to Mexico City, once again to speak on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. These speaking engagements symbolize the great respect that efforts by OPANAL and the Government of Mexico enjoy in the United Nations for their important work in these fields

This year has the potential to be a real turning point for global efforts on behalf of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including nuclear testing.

On 24 September, President Barack Obama will preside over the first-ever summit meeting of the UN Security Council on the subject of nuclear disarmament. The same day, the United Nations will host another Article XIV Conference of States parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held every two years to promote the treaty's entry into force.

Another important treaty relevant to the work of OPANAL is the fissile material treaty, which the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year agreed would be the subject of negotiations. Though the Conference was unable to commence these negotiations in its current session, its agreement on a programme of work broke a stalemate that had lasted 12 years and offers a foundation for further progress next year.

Another positive development in recent months was the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the continent of Africa, which followed the earlier entry into force of the treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. This progress shows clearly the impact that the Treaty of Tlatelolco has had around the world in serving as a model for establishing such zones.

I am very impressed with efforts by the Government of Mexico and the other States parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty to increase cooperation between members of these various regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. There are of course still some areas for additional progress in the months and years ahead. Greater efforts are needed to achieve universal regional membership in the Pelindaba Treaty, to encourage states within these zones to conclude their nuclear safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to achieve full adherence by all of the nuclear-weapon-states to the relevant protocols under the respective treaties

creating such zones. At present, the Tlatelolco Treaty is the only such treaty whose protocols are adhered to by all five nuclear-weapon states.

Another great challenge ahead will be to promote the creation of new regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East. Next May, the States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will be meeting at the United Nations for the treaty's 2010 Review Conference, and one issue that will certainly be high on the list of subjects for discussion will be the progress made in implementing the Middle East Resolution, which was adopted in 1995 as part of the package deal leading to the indefinite extension of the treaty. The goal of establishing such a zone has been endorsed for over 30 years by all states of that region, and the time has surely come for new efforts to bridge the obvious gap between political support for this goal and actual initiatives to achieve it.

The theme I wish to stress today, however, is even a broader one—namely, the importance of continued efforts at national and regional levels in pursuit of multilateral goals. The history of OPANAL shows clearly how a regional organization can contribute significantly to the advancement of global norms, especially nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

As we start seeing new grounds for hope for progress in these fields, the work of OPANAL and its member states is more important than ever. You have already transformed the notion of regional nuclear-weapon-free zone into an initiative with profound global impact, through the example it has set in other regions.

Though there is still much work to do, especially in achieving global nuclear disarmament, I know that the people and governments of this region will never rest until this goal is achieved. I wish to offer all members of the Council my personal commitment to work with you all in this great common cause.

Thank you for extending me this invitation to speak with you today, and please accept my very best wishes for success in all your future work.