



PERMANENT MISSION OF ECUADOR
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK



ECUADOR
PRESIDENCY PRO TEMPORE
2015-2016

Statement by Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States -CELAC- during the General Debate of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (New York, 27 April 2015)

Madam President,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).
2. Let me congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of this very important duty and assure you of our support in your endeavors for a successful outcome.
3. As part of the first densely populated area in the world to be established as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the 33 Member States of CELAC participate in this timely Review Conference with a great desire for meaningful progress towards achieving the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.
4. Since the 2010 Review Conference, Latin American and Caribbean States, as a region, have made further strides in strengthening their commitment towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including at the highest political level. At the Founding Summit of CELAC in December 2011, held in Caracas, Venezuela, our Heads of State and Government adopted a Special Communiqué on the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, in accordance with the region's long-standing position supporting a world free of nuclear weapons. This Declaration reaffirmed that complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament is of the highest priority and also reiterated our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. In each subsequent Summit, 2013 in Santiago, Chile, 2014 in Havana, Cuba, and 2015 in Belén, Costa Rica, the Heads of State and Government have reiterated this same commitment to a nuclear weapons free world through Special Declarations.
5. The commitment of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States towards a world free of nuclear weapons has been further reinforced by the historical proclamation of the region as a "Zone of Peace" on the occasion of the II Summit of the Community, held in January 2014, in Havana, Cuba.
6. Recalling the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, CELAC member States reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of the Charter of the United Nations. The Community reiterates that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete prohibition and total elimination.
7. The Community welcomes the first ever High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament held on September 26, 2013 and the designation by the General Assembly of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. These efforts demonstrate renewed momentum towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons at the United Nations. Recalling the events that took place around the world to mark the first celebration of this day, the Community urges governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.
8. The Community stresses its firm commitment to the implementation of UNGA resolutions 68/32 and 69/58 'Follow-up to the 2013 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament'. The community also welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to hold an International High Level Conference not later than 2018, to identify measures and actions necessary to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time.
9. The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons raises grave concerns in our Community. CELAC calls on all States to address this issue whenever nuclear weapons are discussed, including at this Review Conference. We therefore commend the organization of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna for their deliberations and contributions to the global discourse in achieving a nuclear weapons free world. As demonstrated by the testimonies of survivors, evidence and scientific data, nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to security, the development of peoples and to civilization in general. Furthermore, it has been ascertained that no state or international organization has the capacity to successfully address and provide humanitarian assistance and protection in case of a nuclear blast. These conferences also highlighted the ongoing risk of the detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or design.



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10. We are committed to the commencement 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 and within a multilaterally agreed timeframe. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of Cuba for the commencement of negotiations and subsequent adoption of a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament, presented at the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna in December 2014. This instrument is a necessary measure to achieve nuclear disarmament and would fulfill the obligation of all States Parties to the NPT as expressed in article VI of the Treaty.
11. In this regard, we highlight that during the Community's Summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January 2015, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the Austrian Pledge.
12. Pending the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, CELAC urges for the negotiation and adoption of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances within the shortest possible timeframe. It is a legitimate interest of all non-nuclear weapon states, which include all 33 CELAC Member States, to receive unequivocal and legally binding assurances by nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of such weapons.
13. At the same time that the UN is elaborating its post 2015 development agenda, reaffirming the commitment of developed countries to provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) and exploring new ways to finance the global development agenda, CELAC Member States regretfully note that States possessing nuclear weapons continue to invest large sums to maintain and modernize their nuclear arsenals. Half of the annual investment in these arsenals would be sufficient to achieve the internationally agreed development goals for poverty reduction, including the Millennium Development Goals. For this reason, we declare that nuclear disarmament represents a socioeconomic imperative for the international community. CELAC urges Nuclear Weapon States to allocate more resources to developing countries aimed at promoting peace and sustainable development.
14. We strongly support the message by His Holiness Pope Francis to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in the sense that "Spending on nuclear weapons squanders the wealth of nations. To prioritize such spending is a mistake and a misallocation of resources which would be far better invested in the areas of integral human development, education, health and the fight against extreme poverty".

Madam President,

15. We reaffirm the commitment of our States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which we consider a key instrument in strengthening global peace and security, and maintain our firm position in favor of the full implementation of its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and reiterate that they require a balanced and non-discriminatory implementation.
16. At the same time we reiterate our concern that, while the objectives of the Treaty in relation to non-proliferation and the inalienable exercise of peaceful use of nuclear energy are being implemented, the objectives of nuclear disarmament have not registered any progress, particularly through multilateral measures stipulated in Article 6 of the Treaty.
17. The Community takes note of reductions of nuclear arsenals undertaken by some of the Nuclear Weapons States. However, further and accelerated reductions towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons, regardless of their type and location, in a complete, transparent, verifiable, irreversible manner by all Nuclear Weapons States and under strict international control, are imperative in order to build confidence. There is an urgent need to develop adequate and efficient nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding multilaterally verification arrangements. In view of its mandate, the IAEA is best positioned to play a leading role in this process.
18. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop research, production and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination or double standards and in conformity with Articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. The Community reiterates the commitment of all Parties to the Treaty to facilitate, and participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
19. CELAC also stresses the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT and urges States that have not yet done so, to accede to this Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States. The Community calls on Nuclear-Weapon states to comply with their commitments under Article VI of the Treaty, and to advance the complete elimination of these weapons.



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We urge them to fully and immediately implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the Plan of Action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

20. We wish to reiterate that the establishment of internationally recognized Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, strengthens international peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime, and constitutes an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament.
21. We emphasize that the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) have been and remain a political, legal and institutional reference point in the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. OPANAL's experience, together with that of the other four existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, as a single state unilaterally declared free of nuclear weapons, constitutes an important legacy of the international community for the inspiration of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.
22. In this context, the Community urges nuclear-weapon states to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which constitute factual reservations prohibited by the Treaty, and to respect the denuclearized nature of the Latin American and Caribbean region, thus helping to eliminate the introduction, presence or possible use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region. Therefore, the Community reiterates its commitment to continue working, including through OPANAL, with the Nuclear Weapon States Parties to the Protocols to the Treaty, in order to achieve the removal of these interpretative declarations.
23. CELAC regrets the failure to hold the International Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. CELAC recalls that the convening of this Conference is an important and integral part of the Final Outcome of the 2010 Review Conference. CELAC urges for this conference to be held as soon as possible. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, the Community strongly believes that such a zone would be a crucial step in the peace process in the Middle East, and would contribute to the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken at the Review Conferences in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

Madam President,

24. Despite the NPT's nuclear disarmament objectives, as established by Article VI, the world has not been able to reduce the nuclear threat. The "step-by-step" approach has failed to meet the objectives of the NPT. This approach has not yet achieved the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or the initiation of negotiations for a fissile material treaty, let alone the requirement of eliminating nuclear weapons.
25. In this regard, CELAC reiterates the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT and urges those States in Annex II of the Treaty whose ratification is essential for its entry into force to accelerate the signature and/or ratification process of this instrument. All States must refrain from nuclear weapon test explosions, other nuclear explosions, or any other relevant non-explosive experiments, including subcritical tests. Such actions are contrary to the objectives and purpose of the CTBT and of the NPT.
26. The Community reiterates its call to all States, particularly Nuclear Weapons States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies. We also encourage them to reduce the operational readiness level of these weapons. Likewise, we urge those countries that have joined extended nuclear deterrence policies in the framework of military alliances based on nuclear weapons to implement policies that allow them to eliminate their reliance on nuclear weapons of other States, in accordance with the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and their commitments under the NPT.
27. We also express our total rejection of the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and development of new types of these weapons, as such acts are inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. The reliance on nuclear weapons for security must be renounced and the rejection of nuclear weapons must be reinforced. This has been a long-standing unfulfilled commitment of the Nuclear Weapon States expressed in the outcomes of the Review Conferences in 1995, 2000, and 2010.
28. With regards to safeguards and verification, the Community underlines the work that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been conducting in accordance with the provisions of its Statute and safeguards agreements. CELAC recalls that the IAEA Statute stresses that the agency is authorized to establish and administer safeguards



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designed to ensure that a special fissionable and other materials, services, equipment, facilities and information made available by the Agency or at its request or under its supervision or control are not used in such a way as to further any military purpose; and to apply safeguards, at the request of the parties, to any bilateral or multilateral arrangement, or at the request of a State, to any of that State's activities in the field of atomic energy.

29. Furthermore, the IAEA Statute underscores that in carrying out its functions, the Agency shall conduct its activities in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations to promote peace and international cooperation, in conformity with policies of the Organization furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament and in accordance with any international agreements entered into pursuant to such policies.

Madam President,

30. This Review Conference takes place the same year that the UN is celebrating its 70th Anniversary. This year also commemorates the 70th Anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The international community cannot continue to tolerate the existence of nuclear weapons after banning all other weapons of mass destruction. The indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference does not entail the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons. The time is ripe for multilateral action on the longstanding call for a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons.
31. This Review Conference must forge an ambitious path forward and take into consideration the developments since the previous Conference. For CELAC, simply rolling over previously agreed Plans of Action for another five years is not acceptable, especially given the lackluster implementation of most of the actions related to disarmament. We must make headway towards the achievement of full and effective implementation of all the commitments undertaken thus far.
32. Together, we are shaping the way forward for this Treaty. CELAC has acted upon its responsibility in building a peaceful and safer world free of nuclear weapons. We encourage others to join us on this path. The Member States of CELAC reiterate their full commitment to a meaningful and successful outcome of the Review Conference and reaffirm their readiness to work with you, Madam President, towards this objective. Nuclear weapons must be banned and completely eliminated.