



BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
Permanent Mission to the United Nations

On behalf of the Union of South American Nations
(UNASUR)

Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons

Fist Committee of the General
Assembly

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October 13th 2016

Mr. Chair,

1. Venezuela has the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), in its capacity of Pro Tempore President.
2. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election; we are looking forward to successful meetings under your leadership.
3. With regard to Nuclear Disarmament, UNASUR welcomes the recommendation adopted by the Open Ended Working Group that the 71st General Assembly convenes a conference in 2017 open to all States, international organizations and civil society, to negotiate with the widest possible agreement a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The very existence of those weapons diminishes the security of all States, including those who possess and rely on them. While nuclear weapons exist, there will be a real risk of their use and proliferation. Nuclear disarmament is the only credible way to consolidate the non-proliferation regime. Priority should be given to the negotiation of a Convention on nuclear disarmament that would completely ban such weapons.
4. UNASUR expresses its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and reiterates its support of the "Humanitarian Pledge" whereby 127 States pledged to pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.
5. UNASUR welcomes the annual commemoration of the 26th of September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, aimed at

mobilizing international efforts to attain the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

- 6. UNASUR welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a High Level Conference no later than 2018 to identify further measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons at the shortest possible term and reaffirms its decision to join the efforts of the international community towards the urgent commencement of negotiations of a legally binding multilateral instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons within a multilaterally agreed timeframe.**

Mr. Chair,

- 7. UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the NPT and to the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is UNASUR's view, however, that the disarmament pillar continues to suffer from a serious implementation deficit.**
- 8. In this regard, UNASUR regrets the absence of the adoption of an agreed outcome document on the occasion of the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, due to the lack of consensus related to the issue of the establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass-Destruction in the Middle East.**
- 9. The States of UNASUR also express their deep regret at the failure to implement the agreement arrived at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold the International Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. UNASUR**

strongly believes that such a zone would be a significant contribution to the peace process in the Middle East and the world, and therefore continues to reiterate its call for this conference to be held as soon as possible, with the active participation of all States in the region, as agreed by the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

10. UNASUR would like to stress that the indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference does not entail the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons by any State. In this regard, UNASUR rejects the assertion present in the “Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Nuclear Weapon States”, issued on 15 September 2016, whereby those States noted that their nuclear stockpile maintenance and stewardship programs are consistent with NPT and CTBT objectives, which is an incorrect affirmation.

Mr. Chair,

11. UNASUR is very proud of the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace on January 29, 2014, on the occasion of the Second CELAC Summit held in Cuba, a historic decision aimed at uprooting the use or threat of use of force in our region, which was reaffirmed at subsequent CELAC Summits in Belén, Costa, Rica, and Quito, Ecuador.
12. As members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the States of UNASUR urge all Nuclear-Weapon States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will help to eliminate the risk of use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

13. It is a legitimate interest of Non-Nuclear Weapon States- including all UNASUR members- that Nuclear-Weapon States provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees of not using or threatening to use those weapons. Therefore, we call for work in the negotiation and adoption, in the shortest possible time, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

14. UNASUR also calls upon Nuclear-Weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies, in order to reach the complete elimination of these lethal weapons, regardless of their type or location.

Mr. Chair,

15. Our countries will continue to support the efforts aimed at reviving the work of the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and that there is an urgent need to begin the negotiations of new international legal instruments governing fundamental issues for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

16. We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, particularly those in Annex 2, to do it as soon as possible, as a sign of their political will and their commitment to international peace and security. We thus welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Myanmar and Swaziland.

17. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the Member States of UNASUR reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing as

well as refraining from the development and use of new nuclear weapon technologies and any action that would undermine the object and purpose of the CTBT.

Mr. Chair,

18. The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), the specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament, have been a political, legal, and institutional reference point in the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. OPANAL's experience is also an important legacy of the international community for inspiring the establishment of new Nuclear-Weapon-Free zones. We would like to emphasize that on 14th February 2017 we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the establishment of OPANAL.

19. The Member States of UNASUR would also like to avail of this important occasion to underline the essential contribution of the IAEA in common efforts to establish a more secure world. We would also like to underline the importance of the Brazilian-Argentinean Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, the only bi-national organization of safeguards in the world, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2016 and has accomplished more than 2500 inspections in both countries.

Mr. Chair,

20. To conclude UNASUR wishes to reiterate its call for a world free of nuclear weapons, so that humanity can direct resources devoted to the maintenance

and modernization of nuclear arsenals to the social and economic development of the peoples.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.