

Statement of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in the General Debate of the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

DELEGATION OF EL SALVADOR

Vienna 2 May 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Firstly, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this presidency and express the appreciation for the endeavors made by you in the preparation of this first meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the consultations organized with different regional groups in several venues. I assure you of our cooperation to achieve a positive outcome towards the 2020 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The 2020 NPT Review Conference will be the first meeting after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that will provide the path forward in the international scenario for the next years. The region is especially motivated due to the Preparatory Committee, it recognizes the endeavors that are being executed in the multilateral context with a view to identify effective measures that will be necessary to adopt in order to establish and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. We are celebrating the 50 anniversary of Treaty of Tlatelolco and the beginning of the negotiations of a legally binding instrument that will prohibit the nuclear weapons and lead to the total elimination. We feel a responsibility, as we are the first densely populated area to be declared as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone, to lead the construction of a pacific and safer world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we highlight the fruitful exchange maintained during the Dialogue and Regional Consultation on the Non-Proliferation Treaty which was held last March in Santiago de Chile.
3. Latin American and Caribbean States have made further strides in strengthening their commitments towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including at the highest political level. This commitment has been expressed through the Special Statement in each CELAC Summit: Caracas-Venezuela in 2011, Santiago de Chile in 2013, Havana-Cuba in 2014, Belén-Costa Rica in 2015, Quito-Ecuador in 2016, and Punta Cana- Dominican Republic in 2017; as well as the Ministerial Statement adopted last 14 February on the margin of the commemoration of the 50 anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco whose text has been submitted as a working document in this Preparatory Committee.

4. This commitment has been further reinforced by the historical proclamation of the region as a “Zone of Peace”, reaffirming, among other aspects, the commitment of the States of the region to continue promoting the nuclear disarmament as a prioritized objective and contributing to the general and complete disarmament to foster confidence-building among nations.
5. Recalling the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, CELAC Member States reaffirms that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of the international law, including humanitarian law, and to the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate our deep concern for the threat to humanity that the existence, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as their humanitarian impact, and we strongly emphasize that they must not be used in any moment and under any circumstances. Thus the only effective guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total prohibition and elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and within a clearly defined timeframe.
6. The humanitarian impact of the nuclear weapons raises grave concerns in our Community. CELAC calls on all States to address this issue whenever nuclear weapons will discuss, including this Preparatory Committee. We therefore commend the organization of the Conferences of the Humanitarian Impacts 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.
7. CELAC is committed 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, within a temporal time frame agreed multilaterally. Such instrument is a necessary measure on nuclear disarmament and would fulfill the obligation of States Parties to the NPT as stated in Article VI of the Treaty. In this respect, we congratulate the celebration of the first session of the Conference of the United Nations to negotiate a legally binding instrument that will prohibit nuclear weapons and lead to their total elimination, under the presidency of the Ambassador of Costa Rica Ms. Elayne Whyte.
8. 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 weapons states that includes all countries of our region to receive unequivocal and legally binding assurances by nuclear weapons states against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

9. We reaffirm the commitment of our States to the NPT, and to the full implementation of its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
10. CELAC emphasizes the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT, and therefore urges States that have not yet done so to accede to this Treaty as Non-Nuclear States, and calls on Nuclear-Weapon States to comply with their commitments under Article VI of the Treaty.
11. The Community takes note of the reductions of nuclear arsenals undertaken by some of the Nuclear Weapons States in the past. However, further and accelerated reductions towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons, regardless of their type and location, in a complete, transparent, verifiable, and 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.
12. We also reaffirms 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. We reiterate the commitments 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 use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The establishment of the 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.
14. The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), as the “specialized body in the region for articulating common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament”, are an important endowment of the international community and a political, legal and institutional reference for the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones.
15. The region calls on Nuclear Weapon States that issued interpretative declarations to Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco which are contrary to the spirit of the Treaty, to revise them in conjunction with OPANAL with the objective of reviewing or eliminating them in order to provide full and unequivocal security assurances to the States forming the Nuclear-

Weapon-Free-Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean; and to respect the militarily denuclearized character of the region.

16. We regret 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. The Community recalls that the convening of this Conference in an important and integral part of the Final Outcome of the 2010 Review Conference. We urge 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 Middle East, and would contribute to the fulfillment of the commitment undertaken at the Review Conference in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

17. We reiterate the importance and the necessity of a prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and we urge all those States of the Annex II of the Treaty, whose ratification is indispensable for the entry into force, to accelerate the signing and/or ratification process of said instrument without further delay. Insist that all States shall refrain from carrying out nuclear tests, other nuclear explosions, or any other relevant non-explosive testing, including sub-critical experiments and those conducted through simulation aiming to develop and improve nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Such actions are contrary to the object and purpose of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, to the obligations and provisions contained in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and against the spirit and the letter of the CTBT, thereby undermining its impact as a measure of nuclear disarmament.
18. 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 urges those countries that have joined extended nuclear deterrence policies in the framework of military alliances based on nuclear weapons to implements policies that allow them to eliminate their reliance of nuclear weapons of other States, in accordance with the objective of the Charter of the United Nations and their commitments under the NPT.
19. 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 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 State, to any of the State's activities in the field of atomic energy.

20. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

21. I want to conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the Member States of CELAC to the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to a successful outcome of its 2020 Review Conference. This is expressed in the prompt attention devoted to the high responsibility of our Group in its role, as the presidency of the Conference will be held by it; this aspect led us to the expeditiously unanimous appointment of the Argentinian Ambassador Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi. We hope that the next steps will be promptly accomplished to make official this appointment that we think it will contribute to the constant work and commitment we face to fulfill the high expectations placed on our societies in this review process.

Thank you.