



PERMANENT MISSION OF ECUADOR
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT BY ECUADOR ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES -CELAC- AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

(September 30, 2015)

Mr. 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, Mr. President, for convening this High Level Meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Let me also express CELAC's appreciation to the Secretary- General for his earlier remarks, as well as his efforts to promote nuclear disarmament.
3. For CELAC Member States, the aim of this historic day is threefold: to highlight a collective vision of a Nuclear Weapons Free-World; to mobilize international support and action of governments, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians and the mass media, in advancing the objective of nuclear disarmament, for realizing this vision, and to intensify the call on States to commence negotiations as a matter of highest priority, for the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons.
4. 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 January this year 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 33 Member States of CELAC take pride in belonging to the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and in the experience and legacy of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in inspiring the establishment of new Nuclear Weapon Free Zones around the world.
6. We welcome the historic 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, with the aim of uprooting forever threat or use of force in our region. This proclamation was reaffirmed in the Final Declaration of the Summit of Belén, Costa Rica.

7. Our region, declared a zone of peace, has always strived to advance nuclear disarmament and achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in the world. In this regard, CELAC welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a High Level Conference no later than 2018 to identify 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 instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons within a multilaterally agreed timeframe.
8. The members of our region stresses that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, constituting at the same time a violation of International Law and of International Humanitarian Law, and recall that in this regard the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 1996 unanimously called for negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.
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. 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.
10. In this regard, we highlight that during the Community's Summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the Austrian Pledge, now the Humanitarian Pledge, and we welcome its endorsement by 116 States.
11. 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, as proposed 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.
12. As an interim measure, CELAC reiterates its call to the international community to commence the negotiations 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, including 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. CELAC reiterates its urgent call to Nuclear Weapons States

to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and to respect the denuclearized character of Latin American and the Caribbean.

13. CELAC Member States reject the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of these weapons; as such acts are inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. The Community underscores the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines, security policies and military strategies.
14. Many of these weapons are on high alert status. CELAC urges those States with nuclear weapons on high alert to decrease the operational readiness of their systems.

Mr. President,

15. CELAC maintain our firm stance in favor of the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, non- proliferation, and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination or double standards. 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. The Community calls on Nuclear-Weapon States to comply with their commitments under Article VI of the Treaty, and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons, and 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 Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, which are extant and bind all States Parties. Their non implementation affects the integrity and credibility of the Treaty.
16. Mr. President, we must express our grave disappointment at the lack of consensus, at the recent Review Conference which ultimately prevented the adoption of the draft outcome document. Notwithstanding, let me state that the draft outcome document distributed in the final hours of the Conference with regards to nuclear disarmament did not satisfy the expectations of the Member States of CELAC, and was a step backwards from the outcome documents of previous Review Conferences. The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference should serve as further impetus for those of us who truly believe in the need for the early prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons to renew the efforts towards this objective.
17. CELAC regrets 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. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, CELAC is strongly convinced that the establishment of such zone would be a significant step in the peace process in the Middle East region. In this regard, CELAC deeply regrets that no agreement was found on this issue at the 2015 NPT Review Conference and reminds all NPT Parties that the creation of this zone is an essential component of the decisions that led to the indefinite extension of the NPT, in 1995, which should be fulfilled.

18. At the same time, we reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference does not entail the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons.
19. The Community reiterates the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and urges those States in Annex II of the Treaty whose ratification is essential for its entry into force to accelerate the process of signing and/or ratifying this instrument. Also calls upon all States to refrain from carrying out nuclear weapon test explosions, other nuclear explosions or any other non-explosive relevant experiment, including subcritical experiments, and those performed by supercomputers for the improvement of nuclear weapons. Such actions are contrary to the objective and purposes of the CTBT, as well as to the spirit of the Treaty, thereby undermining the desired impact as a nuclear disarmament measure. In this regard, CELAC welcomes the holding of the Conference on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT, convened under article XIV of the Treaty.
20. Our Community, Mr. President, reaffirms the importance of its collaboration and cooperation with OPANAL, the specialized body in the region in order to articulate common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament.
21. To conclude let me express that CELAC Members States are convinced that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete and total prohibition and elimination. Our Community has acted upon its responsibility in building a peaceful and safer world. We encourage others to join us on this path.
22. I thank you, Mr. President.