
AGENCY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (OPANAL)

The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) is an inter-governmental agency created by the [Treaty of Tlatelolco](#) to ensure that the obligations of the Treaty are met. OPANAL is responsible for convoking regular and special general conferences and consultation meetings related to the established purposes, means, and procedures of the Treaty. OPANAL also supervises the adherence to the Control System and the obligations stemming from the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Principal Organs:

General Conference: The General Conference is one of the three main bodies of OPANAL, which convenes for regular sessions biennially and for special sessions when deemed necessary. The General Conference has a number of duties: studying and ruling on any issue or matter addressed in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, including those that refer to the powers and functions of OPANAL's administrative bodies; establishing procedures to ensure the adherence to the Control System established by the treaty; electing the members of the council; electing and dismissing the secretary-general; receiving and reviewing biennial and special reports presented by the council and the secretary-general; establishing agreements with governments and international agencies; approving the agency's budget and establishing the financial contributions scale for Member States; electing the authorities for each session of the General Conference; establishing any subsidiary organization deemed necessary; and approving the Rules of Procedure.

Developments:

2005: The [19th Regular Session](#) of the General Conference was held in Santiago, Chile, on 7-8 November. The conference re-elected Secretary-General Vargas Carreño of Chile to serve a second term from 1 January 2006-30 June 2009.

States Parties adopted the [Santiago de Chile Declaration](#) to

- Reiterate that the existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to all humanity

- Reaffirm the importance of strengthening OPANAL to ensure complete respect for the Tlatelolco Treaty
- Intensify the cooperation and coordination mechanism with other existing nuclear-weapon-free-zones treaties
- Express States Parties' "profound discouragement" with the lack of disarmament on part of the nuclear-weapons states
- Reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a violation of international law
- Call upon the United Nations General Assembly to consider the actions that the states should undertake to fulfill nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 1996 Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice
- Urge the nuclear-weapon states to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states
- Reiterate that those nuclear-weapon states that signed or ratified protocols to the Tlatelolco Treaty have done so with reservations or unilateral interpretations, and that such reservations should be withdrawn
- Emphasize the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)
- Reaffirm the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy
- Highlight the growing threat to international security posed by non-state actors in possession of nuclear weapons
- Reiterate concern over the transport of radioactive materials and hazardous waste
- Affirm that disarmament and nonproliferation education constitutes an important measure that can contribute toward achieving a world free of nuclear threats.

2004: The [17th Special Session](#) of the General Conference was held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, on 23 November. The conference adopted a [resolution](#) in sup-

port of the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, to be held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, in 2005. The conference also adopted a [resolution](#) reiterating its conviction that the use of nuclear weapons in self-defense against a conventional attack is incompatible with international law.

2003: The 18th Regular Session of the General Conference was held in Havana, Cuba on 5-6 November. OPANAL members adopted the Havana Declaration, in which they recognized the threat posed by nuclear weapons, reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear disarmament, emphasized the value of multilateralism, and expressed concern that new security approaches that emphasize nuclear weapons could lead to the development and support of new types of nuclear capabilities. Within this context, delegates noted their satisfaction that, with Cuba's ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, it had entered into full force. Furthermore, they reiterated their support for nuclear-weapon-free zones, pledging to promote the convening of a Conference of States Parties and signatories to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. They also planned to request a review of declarations formulated by nuclear States Parties to Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to strengthen relevant national controls and verification systems, and to continue working with various international agencies regarding the safe transport of radioactive wastes that affect the treaty's zone of application.

Delegates also passed several resolutions relating to nonproliferation and disarmament during the 18th Regular Session. In a resolution on the "Status of the Treaty and its Additional Protocols," they again expressed satisfaction regarding Cuba's ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and urged all States Parties which had not yet done so to sign or ratify the amendments to the treaty. In another resolution, delegates encouraged all States parties to ratify the Additional Protocol to their respective International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements. In Resolution 443 on the "Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes," General Conference members appealed to States Parties to accurately report their official positions regarding the issue to the secretary-general. Resolution 445 asked OPANAL members to encourage education regarding disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation issues and to implement United Nations' recommendations on the subject. Finally, in Resolution 449, members reiterated the importance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty's entry into force and called on states to refrain from taking actions contrary to its objectives.

2002: The 16th Special session of the General Conference of OPANAL was held in Mexico City on 25 November. The Member States agreed to invite nuclear weapon states, which have reservations about Protocol I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to review their declarations. The Member States hope that these reservations may be removed or modified with the purpose of strengthening the integrity of the denuclearization objective of the treaty. The Member States also approved the budget presented by the secretary-general for Fiscal Year 2002, which sets a maximum of US \$300,000.

2001: The 15th Special Session of the General Conference of OPANAL was held in Mexico City on 15 March. Vargas Carreño of Chile was unanimously elected as secretary-general for the period from 1 June to 31 December 2001 to complete the term of Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, who was appointed as the deputy secretary-general of the Conference on Disarmament. Mr. Carreño's term was extended to 31 December 2005.

At its 17th regular session on 29-30 November in Panama City, Panama, the General Conference adopted Resolution CG/Res.418, entitled "The strengthening of OPANAL," in which it called on the secretary general to prepare a proposal for holding an international conference of the parties to nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ), and to increase the exchange of information and experience with other NWFZ. Other resolutions included calls for further collaboration with the [IAEA](#), and for cooperation among Member States against the illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

1999: The 16th regular session of the General Conference of OPANAL met on 30 November and 1 December in Lima, Peru. The General Conference adopted the "Lima Appeal" for the complete and immediate prohibition of the use and manufacture of nuclear weapons and the prevention of their proliferation. OPANAL's secretary-general was requested to arrange for the distribution of the Lima Appeal as an official document of the Millennium Assembly of the UN.

Council: The council consists of five members, who meet every two months in regular meetings and in special meetings as is necessary. The members are elected for a term of four years. The governments of Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru. are the current members of the Council.

Developments:

2005: On 8 November, the General Conference elected Argentina and Mexico to replace Chile and

Ecuador as council members. Argentina and Mexico will serve on the council from 1 January 2006-30 December 2009.

2003: The council, currently composed of representatives of Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, and Peru, met at OPANAL Headquarters in Mexico City for four ordinary sessions on 21 January, 11 March, 8 May, and 28 August to review the functioning of the control system of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Secretariat: The Secretariat consists of the secretary-general, who is the chief administrative officer of the agency, and the staff. The secretary-general is appointed for four years and may be re-elected to serve a single additional term. The secretary-general may not be a national of the host country (Mexico).

The current secretary-general is Edmundo Vargas Carreño of Chile, who was also re-elected to serve a second term from 1 January 2006-30 June 2009.

Verification and Compliance: *Verification:* On 26 August 1992, during its eighth extraordinary session, OPANAL's General Conference approved amendments to Articles 14, 15, 16, 19, and 20 relating to the verification and control system established by the Tlatelolco Treaty. The purpose of these amendments was to strengthen the verification system while recognizing the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) as the only organization capable of carrying out special inspections requested by parties to the Treaty. The 1992 General Conference at the same time upheld the principle that the organs of OPANAL would continue to be responsible for monitoring the application of the treaty's control system. It should be emphasized that, although the approved amendments modify the verification system, none of the modifications alters the fundamental principles or the essence of the Tlatelolco Treaty. *Compliance:* If a party were found to be in non-compliance, the IAEA would refer the case to the United Nations Security Council.

Developments:

2005: On 26-28 April, the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones was held in Tlatelolco, Mexico. The conference adopted a [declaration](#) reaffirming that nuclear weapons constitute a threat to all humanity, urging nuclear-weapons states to adopt negative security assurances, and stressing the importance of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2004: OPANAL representatives attended the open sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT held in New York from 26 April to 7 May.

2003: From 28 April to 9 May, a OPANAL representative attended the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the (NPT).

2002: On 18 September, a Cooperation Agreement was signed between OPANAL and the [Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty](#) Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna.

In November, Cuba ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco reaffirming its political will to contribute to the peace and security of the region. The ratification made Cuba a member of OPANAL.

Point of Contact:

Secretary-General:

H.E. Mr. Edmundo Vargas Carreño

Schiller 326 - 5° piso

Col. Chapultepec Morales,

Mexico D.F. 11570, Mexico

Tel: (52-55) 5255-2914, 5255-4198 y 5545-9251

Fax: (52-55) 5255-3748

Website: <http://www.opanal.org/>