

Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, in the high level meeting of the U.N. General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament.

Mr. President,

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), that Cuba is honoured to preside, grants great importance to the holding, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, of a High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament. We are committed to participate actively and to contribute as much as possible to the success of this meeting.

The States Member of CELAC reiterate our grave concern at the threat that the ongoing existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use or threat of use poses for mankind.

It is urgent need to advance towards the primary goal of nuclear disarmament and achieve complete and general elimination of nuclear weapons, and in this regard, CELAC joins the efforts of the International Community in making progress towards the negotiation of a universal and legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons.

Our region grants the highest priority to the achievement of a complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament. The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination.

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.

CELAC Member States will participate actively in drafting concrete proposals to achieve universal nuclear disarmament, in accordance with a multilaterally agreed clear, irreversible, and verifiable timeframe.

It is a legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States, which includes all CELAC Member States, the unequivocal and legally binding assurance by nuclear weapon States against the use or threat to use such weapons. We call for a start to the negotiation and adoption, as soon as possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

We call on all States, in particular Nuclear Weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, military strategies and security policies or as a prospective approach for the management of conflicts in order to achieve the total elimination of this armament regardless of its type or geographical location.

Mr. President,

The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones strengthens international peace and security as well as the non-proliferation regime, and is an important contribution to nuclear disarmament.

Latin America and the Caribbean is proud to be the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ), under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). The establishment of a NWFZ in the Latin American and Caribbean region has contributed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to regional and global peace and security.

The Tlatelolco Treaty and the OPANAL have constituted a political, legal and institutional reference in the establishment of other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) in different regions of the world. Today OPANAL's experience, together with that of the other four existing NWFZs and Mongolia as a single State unilaterally declared free of nuclear weapons, constitutes an important heritage of the international community to inspire the establishment of new NWFZs and advance towards the goal of a nuclear weapons free world.

We urge nuclear powers to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols I and II of the Tlatelolco Treaty that constitute actual reservations prohibited by this Treaty. By doing so, they will contribute to eliminate the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region. We will continue working with those States Parties to the Protocols in order to convince them to withdraw or modify such declarations.

We regret the failure to implement the agreement on the convening in 2012 of an International Conference for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The convening of this Conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The outcome of this Conference will be an important contribution to achieve the nuclear disarmament goal. We are firmly convinced that the establishment of said Zone would represent a significant step towards the peace process in the Middle East region. Thus, we urge the convening of this Conference as soon as possible.

CELAC urges Nuclear-Weapon States to fulfill their commitments under Article VI of the NPT, and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons. It is necessary to fully and immediately implement the thirteen (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.

Mr. President,

CELAC Reaffirms the inalienable right of States to develop research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. All Parties to the Treaty have committed themselves to facilitate participation in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We express our total rejection to the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligation of complete nuclear disarmament. All States must refrain from nuclear weapon test explosions, other nuclear explosions or any other relevant non-explosive experiments, including subcritical experiments, for nuclear weapons development purposes. Such actions are contrary to the object and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), its spirit, if not the letter, undermining its desired impact as a nuclear disarmament measure.

CELAC demands a comprehensive nuclear test ban and urges those States in Annex II whose ratifications are essential for the entry into force of the CTBT to accelerate the process of signing and/or ratifying this instrument, as a matter of priority and an indication of their political will and commitment to international peace and security.

We reaffirm the importance of initiating negotiations for an international legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons and commitment towards this primary goal.

The First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD-I) established the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We urge the CD to demonstrate the necessary political will in order to ensure the commencement without delay of substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a balanced and comprehensive program of work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament.

We recognize the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by Resolution A/RES/67/56 of the United Nations General Assembly, with the mandate to put forward proposals to foster multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Member States of CELAC have contributed with concrete proposals to the work of this Group.

We reiterate the firm commitment of the CELAC to work on convening an International High-Level Conference as soon as possible to identify ways and methods to eliminate nuclear weapons with the briefest possible delay, aimed at agreeing on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific timeframe in order to ban the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and stipulate their destruction.

CELAC member States express our greatest concern at the humanitarian impact of vast proportions and global effects of any accidental or intentional nuclear detonation. We call upon the International Community to reiterate its concern on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons whenever the debate on this type of weapons takes place.

We welcome the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in March 2013, and, in this regard, called all States to participate in the Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Mexico, on February 13-14, 2014.

Member States of CELAC will continue coordinating positions and contributing to the implementation of practical actions as a follow-up to this High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly, including the adoption of a resolution on the matter in the First Committee, during this 68th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Cuba, a small country that defended its independence even in the face of the threat posed by a nuclear holocaust, will participate actively in the international movement advocated by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro Ruz to demand the destruction of all the nuclear weapons, the mere existence of which endangers the survival of the human species.

Thank You.

New York, 9/27/2013