



## **50 years of the Treaty of Tlatelolco: an inspiration to the world**

Remarks by Mr KIM Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs



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Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of OPANAL  
Ambassador Miguel Ruiz Cabañas, Vice minister for Human Rights and Multilateral Affairs of Mexico  
Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations  
Distinguished representatives from the world's nuclear weapon-free zones  
Distinguished delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to represent the United Nations and the Secretary-General at this important event. First of all, my heartfelt congratulations should go again to all States Parties and Secretary-General Soares on the successful adoption of the declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in February. It recognised the important role the treaty has played in nuclear disarmament, but also the need to redouble our efforts to overcome the obstacles to our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I want to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Soares and OPANAL, and Ambassador Vieira and the Government of Brazil for arranging today's event and allowing all United Nations Member States to celebrate the landmark Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Through its maintenance of the nuclear weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, OPANAL has made a lasting contribution not only to nuclear disarmament, but also to our collective security. As a pioneering organisation, OPANAL has blazed the trail for others to follow. They have been a true friend of the United Nations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. For all of this, OPANAL should be amply congratulated.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco has spurred the creation of four additional nuclear weapon-free zones. Together with the Antarctic Treaty and the nuclear-free status of Mongolia, these zones now cover one hundred and thirteen countries across 81 million square kilometres of territory. The entire Southern Hemisphere is effectively a nuclear weapon-free zone, covering around eight hundred million people, 100% of the population, while approximately 1.3 billion people in the Northern Hemisphere, only about 20% of the population (one fifth), belong to such zones.

Tlatelolco's influence can be distinctly felt across the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, not only in its descendants but in the three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty itself.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

2017 can be an important year for nuclear disarmament. Negotiations on a groundbreaking treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons have commenced today. Later this month the High Level Expert Preparatory Group on Fissile Materials will meet to discuss ways in which this long overdue goal can finally be realised. Finally, the 2020 NPT review cycle will begin in May.

Each of these events can make a positive contribution in a mutually reinforcing manner. There are multiple pathways to nuclear disarmament and parallel approaches can be pursued in tandem.

There is, however, one ingredient that is vital to the success of all of our endeavours in nuclear disarmament. That is inclusive dialogue. Inclusive dialogue means respecting differences and being willing to listen to each other in a spirit of compromise and flexibility.

In many ways, the treaty of Tlatelolco is the archetype for inclusive dialogue and flexible engagement in disarmament. At the Treaty's inception, not all States of the region were willing to join or even agreed on its purpose. But because of the treaty's inherent inclusivity and flexibility, regional membership is now universal. Its goals have now become an inherent part of the region's DNA.

The treaty also stands as an enduring example of how disarmament accords can bolster regional peace and security. Tlatelolco effectively prevented Latin America and the Caribbean from becoming yet another front in the Cold War nuclear competition. It was also the first treaty to include legally-binding assurances from nuclear weapon States.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we embark on what I hope will be a transformative year in nuclear disarmament, it is important to remember two points.

First, we will not achieve our grand ambition without the support of the global public. We must find a way to galvanise that support to help us overcome the many challenges that lie ahead.

As former US Secretary of Defense William Perry emphasised at the recent event commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Tlatelolco, we need "to educate people on how serious the problem is. Only then can we develop the policies that are appropriate for the danger we face."

Second, we must learn from the spirit of foresight and resolve that the founders of the Treaty of Tlatelolco showed fifty years ago. Let us emulate their example.

Together we can make 2017 a year of action to create a safer and more secure world for all.

I thank you so much.