



PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. ABELARDO MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, DEPUTY MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL
ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.**

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Mr. Chairman,

The Cuban delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

We live the absurdity of a world that incurs exorbitant expenditure on armaments, including ever-more-deadly nuclear weapons, while asserting that there are not enough resources to promote development and combat hunger, poverty and disease. Today, after 71 years from the atomic bombings which spread destruction and death in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nothing can justify that humanity remains threatened by the existence of nearly 16,000 nuclear weapons; over 4,000 of them ready to be deployed immediately.

Science has come to irrefutable conclusions. It is impossible to be adequately prepared to combat or mitigate the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Intentional or not, the detonation of a small fraction of the existing arsenals would have disastrous effects for our planet.

The role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies must be urgently eliminated once and for all.

Mr. Chairman,

Last August 19, the Member States took the historic decision to commend the United Nations General Assembly to start negotiating, in 2017, a legally binding instrument dealing with the prohibition of nuclear weapons, with a view to their elimination.

It is our hope that this instrument will be formally adopted in 2018 on the occasion of the High-Level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, summoned by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The prohibition of nuclear weapons would be fully justified, because their use or threat of use, under any circumstances, would be in breach of International Law and a crime against humanity.

The prohibition of nuclear weapons would be a significant but insufficient step. Cuba, like the vast majority of the international community, will continue to firmly advocate the adoption, as soon as possible, of a Convention that sets out their elimination within a certain timeframe and under strict international control.

The only way to ensure that humanity will never suffer again from the terrible impact of nuclear weapons is their eradication in a transparent and irreversible manner.

Until the achievement of total nuclear disarmament, there is an urgent need for an international instrument, through which nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional and legally binding assurances to never use or threat to use them against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Likewise, the interpretative declarations of Nuclear States to Additional Protocols of the treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, including the Treaty of Tlatelolco, should be ended; and the International Conference on establishing a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East must be held without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Latin America and the Caribbean have been at the forefront of the international struggle for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our region was the first densely populated area in the world to be declared as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Moreover, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Havana on 29 January 2014, a landmark step was taken when our region was formally proclaimed as a Zone of Peace. The Proclamation includes the strong commitment of the States of the region to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority objective.

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, September 26, must be a day for mobilization and reflection, a reminder of our shared responsibility

to protect our planet from the danger posed by nuclear weapons, for the sake of present and future generations.

Human beings and peoples have the legitimate right to live in peace in a world free of nuclear weapons.

As highlighted by Fidel Castro Ruz, the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, “(...) no country in the world should have nuclear weapons, and that energy must benefit the human species. Without such objective of cooperation, humanity is inexorably on the way to its own destruction.”

Thank you very much