



*PARLIAMENTARY ROUNDTABLE DURING THE VIENNA CONFERENCE ON THE
HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS*

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**SECURITY WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS: FROM LATIN AMERICAN TO A
NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD**

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Thank you so much. Good morning everyone.

It is a great pleasure to participate in this roundtable with so many distinguished colleagues from all over the world. As the IPU resolution of last March reaffirmed, parliamentarians have an extremely important role in building *momentum* for a constructive NPT Review Conference in 2015 and, more importantly, to continue promoting the ultimate goal of a world that is free from nuclear weapons.

Latin America has an important experience to share. The NPT was a process inspired, in large part, by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, or Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean, which entered into force on the 25th of April 1969. It came into existence thanks to the efforts of Alfonso Garcia Robles, a distinguished Mexican Ambassador that in 1982 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

All 33 States in Latin America and the Caribbean have signed and ratified the Treaty, once Cuba took this step in October of 2002.

The first point I would like to make this morning is the underlying paradox of how nuclear weapons are viewed still today. For Latin America and the Caribbean it has long been clear that they generate insecurity, aggravate international tensions, heighten the possibility of conflict, and jeopardize peace efforts. Their development and maintenance require the allocation of considerable resources that could otherwise be used to achieve our socioeconomic development goals. For us, the only way to ensure peace and stability is through transparency and confidence-building measures. These are lessons of the Tlatelolco Treaty.

The possessors of nuclear weapons view them as a guarantee for their security. We cannot agree to this basic premise, as we share their aspiration for peace. There is consensus in Latin America over the value of recognizing the negative consequences of the very existence of nuclear weapons, and of the devastating and indiscriminate harm they can cause.

We must see these weapons for what they are. We must recognize that their use, and indeed the tests that have led to them, are among the darkest hours of mankind. A broader recognition of this fact is one of the accomplishments of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, the third of which is taking place here in Vienna.

The second point I believe is important to bear in mind is the importance of precedent-setting when assessing negotiation models in this field. The Treaty of Tlatelolco established the first Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone, prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, transfer, transit, placement, testing, stockpiling, storage, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has hailed it as an example of how regional initiatives can advance global

norms, even in turbulent political times. There is no doubt that the Cuban Missile Crisis provided urgency to regional disarmament.

Also clear is the importance of the Tlatelolco Treaty to the creation of other nuclear weapons-free zones that encompass Africa and wide areas of Asia and the Pacific. As you know, there is increasing cooperation and coordination between the members of these different regional mechanisms, and the process to establish a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East is a very relevant pending issue.

A final lesson from the Tlatelolco Treaty that I would like to highlight is the importance of like-minded countries acting together in a decided manner. The Treaty was negotiated by the countries of the region that had unity of purpose. Not all relevant actors were present at the outset. Similarly, to advance towards our current goal, we do not need to wait until all States that possess nuclear weapon decide that it is time to act.

The Chair's Summary of the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Nayarit, Mexico, makes reference to the value of engaging in a diplomatic process aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons. Should a new legal standard be set in this regard, we would not only reinforce the value of multilateralism, but also pave the way for nuclear disarmament. This would be a major task and would require the concerted effort of many.

This parliamentary meeting could become an important forum to discuss the general lines of a strategy to foster an action plan to our shared goal of a nuclear weapons free world. Parliamentarians can make great contributions. We can certainly exert pressure on our governments to change those national security doctrines, we can work together in order to establish alliances promoting new nuclear-free-zones, enhancing the communication between them, and the sharing good practices. We can call for the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT.

In 2015 we will have several highly symbolic opportunities to do this, such as the Third Meeting of the Treaties that establish Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones in April, the Review Conference of the NPT in May, the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, and the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in October. Let us seize this juncture, *the momentum is already here*.

Thank you so much for your attention.