



Press Release

THE AMERICAS REAFFIRM NUCLEAR WEAPONS-FREE OBJECTIVES

February 8, 2008

Member countries of the [Organization of American States](#) reaffirmed their commitment to the Western Hemisphere as a nuclear weapons free-zone, stressing at the same time their support for the [International Nuclear Test Ban Treaty](#).

The commitment was stressed as the OAS [Permanent Council's Committee on Hemispheric Security](#) convened in special session on Thursday, under the chairmanship of St. Kitts and Nevis Permanent Representative, Ambassador Izben Williams. OAS Secretary General [José Miguel Insulza](#) along with Secretary for Multidimensional Security Ambassador Alexandre Addor-Netto joined member state ambassadors and representatives at the special meeting, which reviewed the consolidation of the regime established in the Treaty of Tlatelolco and promoted the full force and effect of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

OAS Assistant Secretary General [Albert R. Ramdin](#) in opening remarks declared that the organization "will continue to be our region's most steadfast compass and proponent of peace and security in the Americas." Noting that 32 member countries have signed and ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco—with 31 signing and 29 ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty—Ambassador Ramdin hailed the "historic effort" of Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve full implementation of the Tlatelolco Treaty. He called that effort "an important model for other regions with a growing interest in attaining similar goals.

"We now must strive to make the 21st century a period of renewed peace and order between states, ensuring an environment conducive to achieving social, political and economic progress, as well as security for all the Peoples of the Americas," Ramdin added.

Ambassador Williams, the Chairman of the Committee on Hemispheric Security, meanwhile declared the special meeting was "very useful" in considering OAS progress with respect to initiatives on the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and related instruments. "It is not by any means a quick march, but there is progress being made," he explained.



“It is really important for us as a region to seek exploit as best we can all the benefits to be derived from promoting the new, multidimensional thrust in security,” said Ambassador Williams, who also cited General Assembly resolutions by which the OAS has committed itself to addressing hemispheric issues covered in those treaties. Williams further explained that the special meeting also marked the anniversary of Treaty of Tlatelolco, some 40 years ago to ban nuclear weapons in the Americas.

The member state representatives also heard a presentation by Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the [Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization \(CTBTO\)](#), a United Nations agency. Tóth reviewed regional cooperation mechanisms of the CTBTO Preparatory

Commission to promote the full force and effect of the CTBTO and to forge national capabilities for applying it. He also highlighted resources available to OAS member states and the potential benefits of civil and scientific applications of the technologies used in the CTBT’s international monitoring system, as well as peaceful purposes of nuclear energy.

The report by Perla Carvahlo Soto, Assistant Secretary General of the [Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean \(OPANAL\)](#), focused on the fulfillment of commitments undertaken by the region’s states in the [Declaration on Security in the Americas](#), relating to nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. The [UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs](#), Sergio de Gueiroz Duarte, provided details on the worldwide comprehensive test ban treaty.

Reference: E-031/08