

Mexico City, 15 June, 2009.

Dear Friends,

We were delighted to hear of the celebration of the International Conference "*Article 9 and Article 12: Peace Constitutions for Global Disarmament*", organized by the Japan-based organization Peace Boat, the Latin American branch of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and the Faculty of Law of the University of Costa Rica.

This visionary opportunity highlights two exemplary constitutions that make calls for peace, security and harmony amongst the nations of the world. The experiences lived by both Costa Rica and Japan, translated into the form of their constitutions, are proof of the judicial will of both nations to pursue efforts at the national and international levels in favour of peaceful coexistence on this planet. Along with the rest of Latin America, Mexico has also been part of this effort, in the figure of Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his promotion of the signing of the Tlatelolco Treaty, which has been in force in our region for so many decades already.

This Conference presents a great opportunity to reflect upon fundamental issues that form part of the contemporary international agenda. For too long, it seemed that the fight against nuclear proliferation and efforts in favour of disarmament were destined to remain unadvanced. However, the speech delivered on 5 April this year by United States President Barack Obama in Prague's Hradcany Square has renewed the hope in all of us who are convinced of the urgent necessity to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to move forward in the elimination of existing stockpiles.

In his already famous words, the President of the United States reminded us that the existence of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War, stating "*clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons*".

As you are undoubtedly aware, the latest estimations by experts in the field bring the number of existing nuclear weapons to over 25 thousand, 95% of which remain in the hands of Russia (54%) and the United States (41%). Keeping those figures in mind, we are very encouraged by the recent negotiations in Moscow on 20 May, for both nuclear superpowers to work on a new Agreement that will substitute the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the current framework limiting the scope of nuclear arsenals, and which is set to expire on 5 December.

However, the way to disarmament is plagued with obstacles. Even if the United States and Russia make authentic and heartfelt efforts towards the reduction of their existing arsenals, setting an example for other States possessing such arms, other existing factors must be kept in mind to avoid a false optimism.

Some states strategically view the possession of the nuclear deterrent power as a way to deal with perceived threatening situations around them. Some concrete examples we can mention are firstly Israel, convinced of the alleged Iranian efforts to develop its own such arms, and secondly the historical territorial struggle between India and Pakistan; these situations make it extremely difficult for any of these three states to show any inclination to contributing to the process of disarmament.

For these reasons, it is difficult not to fear further proliferation. One example is Iran's alleged nuclear activities. Furthermore, information regarding recent actions taken by Pakistan to extend its nuclear facilities was also recently published in Le Monde and The New York Times, 18-20 May¹; and there have been threatening actions by North Korea over the last three months.

At the same time, we have also had to face the possibility of these armaments falling in the hands of criminal and terrorist organizations, who would use them to pursue their own objectives.

This last factor makes it even more urgent for the international community to take coordinated actions in the realms of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. They should use all available means to ensure that comprehensive international judicial mechanisms are observed and respected.

In this context, the efforts of IALANA, Peace Boat, and the Faculty of Law of the University of Costa Rica in organizing this Conference are commendable.

Unfortunately, I am not able to personally attend this important occasion, but I wish to convey this message of recognition to all of you. I also celebrate the good timing and strength of your commitment to hold this Conference, to promote disarmament and non-proliferation in our nations, as well as the possibility for us to look into possible revisions of current legislation in our region, in light of such a noble cause.

Our best wishes of success from Mexico.

Rosario Green
Senator of the Republic
United States of Mexico