The Latin American and Caribbean Leadership Network for Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation (LALN) today urged that both states with and without nuclear arms together undertake a comprehensive effort to reduce nuclear risks.

LALN, just days before the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, also reaffirmed its commitment with the efforts to prevent that the security vulnerability of any state be taken advantage of by terrorists or others, seeking to acquire a nuclear device.

The statement was released during a press conference, organized by LALN, the Fissile Materials Working Group (FMWG) and the NPSGlobal Foundation, a non-governmental organization of Argentina that promotes reductions in international security risks.

Irma Argüello, presidente de NPSGlobal, pointed out in the meeting with journalists that the agenda of the Nuclear Security Summit “is of máximum importance, and not only for developed nations.”

“A terrorist attack, including the explosion of a small, rudimentary nuclear bomb in any place in the world, in addition to causing tens of thousands of victims, would have political and economic
consequences of a global scale,” Argüello, who also is a member of LALN and the FMWG, said. “In this type of situation, developing nations like ours would suffer the greatest harm, for among reasons including the disruption of international commerce and the lack of essential supplies.”

The Nuclear Security Summit will be held March 24 y 25 in The Hague with the presence of 53 countries and more than 30 chiefs of state, including the presidents of the United States, Barack Obama, and of France, François Hollande. The leaders will analyze joint and individual efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and the trafficking of materials that could be used to build a nuclear weapon.

Latin America will be represented by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico.

Image gallery

In addition to Argüello, the meeting with journalists was attended by the former Argentine Defense Ministers, José Pampuro, Ricardo López Murphy and Horacio Jaunarena, all signatories of the LALN statement.

Argüello will attend the Nuclear Knowledge Summit in The Hague. The Knowledge Summit is a meeting of multilateral as well as non-governmental organizations that is carried out in parallel to and as part of the Security Summit. It will attempt to define, within the context of free and innovative discussions, the first ideas for the agenda for the next and final Summit, to be held in Washington in 2016.
The LALN statement was signed by its 14 members, regional statesmen who have held high-ranking positions in the governments of eight nations of the region.

The statesmen explained that the nations without nuclear arms are tiring of making contributions to nuclear risks in an almost unilateral fashion due to the refusal of countries with nuclear arms to make significant advances in disarmament. They added that more than 20 years after the end of the Cold War, nuclear powers maintain essentially the same national security posture that they had before, based primarily on the doctrine of mutually assured destruction.

“The paradigm of nuclear deterrence as a source of global power and respect is as strong as it ever was,” the statement said. “It deeply contaminates any and all disarmament proposals.”

“In this sense the countries with nuclear weapons, in pursuit of their security doctrines, remain reluctant to fulfill the disarmament commitments they assumed in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and even more, they dismiss even the possibility of debating a binding legal instrument which, in line with the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion, may establish the illegality of nuclear weapons on an international basis,” it added.

“Nevertheless, in the absence of concrete progress in disarmament, the lack of enthusiasm and fatigue of states without nuclear weapons – and without the intention to acquire them- become increasingly clear in relation to taking on more obligations or accepting proposals that set limits to their rights to fully develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses,” it said.

In light of the Nuclear Security Summit, LALN urged countries with nuclear arms to take measure to achieve a reduction of nuclear risks by way of a comprehensive effort jointly with non-nuclear weapon states.

“We have no doubt that nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation and nuclear security must be treated as parts of an integrated system for the reduction of nuclear risks, and as such, that these efforts should be harmonized within the framework of shared responsibilities among all states and non-governmental actors,” the LALN statement said.
The grouping of regional statesmen also recommended:

- That the Summit take the step of speaking out in support of including nuclear materials and installations, held in a military context, as part of any system designed to prevent nuclear terrorism and trafficking of nuclear materials. Eighty-five percent of nuclear weapons usable materials are housed at military facilities, as are the world's 17,000 nuclear arms, and are to date excluded from nuclear agreements designed to combat nuclear terrorism and proliferation.

- That countries with nuclear arms participate in meetings and discussions on total nuclear disarmament as well as the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, including specifically the Third Meeting on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Vienna in the second half of 2014. The great majority of the nine nuclear weapons states failed to participate in the previous meeting on this subject, held in Nayarit, Mexico, in February.

The other members of LALN are: Sergio Abreu, current Senator and former Uruguayan Foreign Minister; Álvaro Bermúdez, former Director of Energy and Nuclear Technology of Uruguay; Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations for Disarmament Affairs and a member of Brazil’s diplomatic service; Sergio González Gálvez, former Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs and currently an advisor to the Mexican presidency; Oswaldo Jarrín, former Defense Minister of Ecuador; Miguel Marín Bosch, former Permanent Alternate Representative in the United Nations and a member of Mexico’s diplomatic service; Jaime Ravinet de la Fuente, former Defense Minister of Chile; Camilo Reyes Rodríguez, former Minister of Foreign Relations of Colombia; Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, former Minister of Science and Technology and a member of Brazil’s diplomatic service; Noel Sinclair, Permanent Observer of the Caribbean community – CARICOM – at the United Nations and member of Guayana’s diplomatic service.

Read the full statement of the Latin American and Caribbean Leadership Network for Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation.
Latin American Statesmen urge Comprehensive Reduction of Nuclear Risks

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