

Eighth Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting

Address by the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

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As Delivered

Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Foreign Minister Bishop,
Foreign Minister Kishida,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first express my sincere gratitude to you, co-organizers of this meeting, to the Friends of the CTBT, and to the Governments of Australia and Japan for your continuing support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I am honoured by the presence of the Secretary-General and gratified by the attendance of so many Ministers and high-level dignitaries.

I often say that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the most adhered-to instruments in disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty, as mentioned just now, has 183 States Signatories and, by the close of this very day, will have 166 ratifying States. I would like to welcome here the Foreign Minister of Swaziland who just came to the stage to reaffirm Swaziland's support to this Treaty; and then Myanmar as well, where the Foreign Minister will soon present the ratification at the Treaty event. I wish to thank the Governments of Myanmar and of Swaziland for their determined efforts.

The Treaty's verification regime continues to demonstrate its unique and irreplaceable value. As you are all too aware, our International Monitoring System was faced with two announced nuclear tests this year, one in January and one not even two weeks ago, both conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I am pleased to report that the verification regime performed as planned. And after these events, International Monitoring System data, in both raw and reviewed formats, were provided to States Signatories well within the timelines set down by the Treaty.

But yet we have to guard against complacency. If each nuclear test announced by the DPRK is met with a mere shrug of the shoulders, this sends a dangerous signal. It is my hope – and, I think, our shared aspiration – that the international community will make clear its resolve that the norm against nuclear testing must be entrenched and followed by all nations.

This year is a milestone for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Almost exactly twenty years ago, on 24 September 1996, the CTBT was opened for signature. We have enjoyed twenty years with an almost complete cessation of nuclear testing, supported by a robust, shared, international system for detection and monitoring.

What we do not yet have is a Treaty that is legally in force. And let me be clear – while the CTBT can be described as a Treaty in *operation*, there is ultimately no satisfactory alternative to its entry into force.

I have been often approached to provide my views on the possibility of a Security Council resolution and a statement from the P5. My answer was always: whatever contributes to advancing the CTBT is welcome. Now that the P5 Statement has been issued, and a final text of a possible Security Council resolution is under consideration, I am encouraged by two aspects that have been emphasised and which I consider of utmost significance:

1. The value of a signature and thereby the re-validation of the 183 signatures that we have. It reminds us that we have 183 States that are bound by international law to not carry out any nuclear weapons test explosion, or any other nuclear explosions; and
2. The value of the International Monitoring System. Not only because of its technical robustness, but – most importantly – because of its participatory and democratic nature that is politics and power proof. It is my sincere hope, that this will and commitment of 98% of the world will now become stronger and louder and that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty will enter into force.

It is also why, at the beginning of our Treaty anniversary event, I launched a CTBTO Youth Group to assist, together with the Group of Eminent Persons, the Friends of the CTBT and then the Article XIV framework in making sure that we are advancing the entry into force of the Treaty.

Despite the challenges, I do see progress – and many reasons for optimism. Together, let us strengthen our resolve. As States Signatories, you are the stakeholders and owners of the process that will lead us to the entry into force. Let's not wait another twenty years. It is time to lock in the benefits of this Treaty and secure a nuclear test-free world once and for all.

Thank you.