



STATEMENT

Minister of Foreign & European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

H. E. **Miroslav LAJČÁK**

20th Anniversary of CTBT | Ministerial Meeting

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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here today to **commemorate** the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**. This occasion allows us to **contemplate** more deeply on what we have **achieved** over this period. And it also gives us an **opportunity** to look forward to the future together.

The Comprehensive **Nuclear-Test-Ban** Treaty is an **indispensable building block** within the complex and intertwined nuclear **disarmament** and **non-proliferation** architecture. Together with the **Non-Proliferation** Treaty it represents one of its **central pillars**. It thus contributes substantially to strengthening the global **peace, security and stability**.

Common understanding of CTBT's **real value** is **best demonstrated** by achieving its **near universal adherence**. So far it has been **signed by** 183 states and **ratified by** 164 of them. The nuclear test **moratorium** has become a de facto **international norm**. It has had **positive effects** on the international security environment.

In 20 years the CTBTO **Preparatory Commission** and **Signatory States** have together managed to create a **system** capable of **monitoring and detecting** nuclear explosions anywhere on Earth. Taking into account its **global scale**, it really is an **enormous achievement**.

The international monitoring system is nearly complete. It is **robust** and **effective**. It has already contributed to critical **scientific data** on many key issues. They range from **tsunami warnings** to tracking **radioactivity** and nuclear reactor **accidents**.

We can be pleased with all of this. At the same time, we cannot turn a **blind eye** to some other **facts** on the ground.

Sure, the 20th **anniversary** of the CTBT is an opportunity to **highlight** its achievements. Yet it is also an **occasion** to focus on what **still needs to be done**. Despite all the **efforts**, the Treaty has **not yet** entered into **force**. We need to **finish**, what has been **started** in Geneva 20 years **ago**.

With every new ratification and signature of the CTBT we are one **step closer** to this goal and to the **universalization** of the Treaty. We also recognize that the CTBT **Annex II countries** bear a **special responsibility** for the Treaty to enter into force. Slovakia thus **continuously calls** on all States that have **not signed or ratified** the CTBT to do so **without delay**. That **pertains** especially to the **remaining Annex II countries**.

Without the **legally-binding** Treaty, nuclear test **moratorium** also remains a **fragile accomplishment**. The latest North Korea's nuclear test shows the **urgency** to put the CTBTO and its full **verification regime in place**. On the other hand, this case has proved that the **monitoring system works** and is **reliable**. It detected **unusual seismic waveforms** practically immediately.

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Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This gathering is also a **moment to think** how **each state** can **best contribute** to CTBT goals. We are aware that **when** the Treaty **enters into force**, the CTBTO **engagement** will be very **extensive**. And the **verification regime** must be then **fully operational**.

So in our view it is **crucial to support** activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat in technical terms. It should help it **fulfil its mandate**, including the **training** of inspectors and **testing** of monitoring devices.

Slovakia is **committed** to actively contribute to **building up the verification regime**. We see our **particular role** through hosting **various exercises** on our territory. **Busy cooperation** between Slovakia and the Provisional Technical Secretariat **started** already in 2001.

This year, Slovakia will **host** an **On-Site Inspection Course** for some 80 **trainees** from around the world. The participants will **acquire basic skills** needed for conducting On-Site Inspections. We are **ready** to provide our **available capacities** and **expertise** also in the future.

Additionally, I am pleased to announce that the Agreement between **Slovakia** and the **Preparatory Commission** related to **On-Site Inspections** has been **ratified** last week.

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, in conclusion, to **reiterate** that Slovakia will continue its support for the CTBT. We stand ready to **deepen** our existing **cooperation** with the **Provisional Technical Secretariat**.

Thank you for your attention!

