

**CTBT: Science and Technology 2017 Conference**

**Message by the Executive Secretary  
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization  
Dr Lassina Zerbo**

*Vienna, 27 June 2017*

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Your Royal Highness Princess Sumaya,  
Minister Pereira Teixeira,  
Minister Dissa,  
Undersecretary Cancela,  
Deputy Minister Santana Núñez,  
Secretary-General Linhart,  
Director General Al-Herbish  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished scientists,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you to the Project Executives, Nurcan and Randy, for your introduction. And thanks indeed for all you have done to ensure a successful Science and Technology Conference 2017.

This is the first year we have two “Conference leaders” instead of one: a woman and a man. In fact, women and men feature prominently as speakers this morning and throughout the week.

This is no accident. When she spoke at the last SnT, South African Science and Technology Minister Naledi Pandor called for more effort to empower and encourage women. So we have tried our best to avoid so-called “manels” on this occasion.

Looking around the room, I am happy to see familiar faces from all the way back to our first Conference in 2006. But I am also very excited to see so many new ones, including a number of young scientists and members of the CTBTO Youth Group.

It fills me with inspiration to see senior policymakers and experts coming together with the “new kids on the block”, the youth.

The CTBT Science and Technology conferences have always been unique. Where else would you find so many scientists and experts coming together to collaborate on nuclear test monitoring science and technology? However, this year I am particularly enthusiastic about the “youth strand” that has been integrated throughout the programme.

The CTBTO Youth Group was launched last year with only nine members. Today we have around 200. About 70 of them are attending this Conference – and they are already shaking things up with their active participation!

This year we also have a number of sessions that bring together the diplomacy side of the CTBT with the scientific side. I have always said that both of these are closely linked.

Increasing the recognition of the CTBT in both science and diplomacy is a passion for me. And I’m sure this is something everyone here can understand.

Of course, at its heart the SnT conference series remains a forum for exchanging knowledge and sharing information on nuclear test monitoring science and technology. It is also about enlarging the scientific community engaged in test-ban monitoring, including among young scientists.

Around 1,000 participants from over 120 countries have registered to take part this year. We received more than 650 abstracts, nearly 400 posters, and over 100 oral presentations.

By any measure, the CTBT's science-based verification regime is an enormous success. The performance of the International Monitoring System already exceeds all expectations at 92 % completion. Proof of its effectiveness came with each of the five nuclear tests conducted by North Korea, including the two tests conducted last year.

In each case we detected and transmitted reliable and verifiable data to States in near real time, and provided briefings within hours of the events. Tomorrow morning there will be a panel discussion on the DPRK tests featuring five well-known scientists active in CTBT monitoring technologies.

Member States also gain from the civil and scientific applications of IMS data. We have the only international system of monitoring stations spanning the entire globe. Our sensors are constantly scanning the earth and collecting data that can be used in scientific studies to advance our understanding of the earth and its processes.

The SnT is a unique opportunity to consider how to make the verification regime even more successful in future. I look forward to hearing about this and other topics from the dedicated scientists in this room over the course of the week.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month I addressed the Preparatory Committee for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, emphasizing that the status quo is not secure enough in an unstable geopolitical climate. This was a key point on which NPT States Parties were in agreement.

However, I also made clear that simply voicing agreement is not enough. To bring the CTBT into force we must insist on action over words.

So it is encouraging that scientists from *all* of the remaining Annex 2 States, with one notable exception, are participating in this conference and working together to refine the CTBT verification regime. I earnestly hope that through scientific advancement and collaboration we can inspire diplomatic action.

We must focus on advancing our common objectives in science and technology to increase trust and mutual understanding. Scientific collaboration is essential to achieving a world free from the nuclear threat. It is also vital for making progress on other global challenges, such as disaster risk reduction and mitigation, climate change, and sustainable development.

This is the message that I want you to take away from this Conference: Collaborative science for peace and development.

I wish to highlight in particular our keynote speakers who are helping deliver that message this morning: Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya of Jordan, President of the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan; Maria Candida Pereira Teixeira, Minister for Science and Technology, Angola; and, Pascale Ultré Guérard, National Centre for Space Studies, France.

I also look forward to our distinguished panel this morning on opportunities and challenges facing the CTBT, as well as to the address on Friday morning by José Fidel Santana Núñez, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, Cuba.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the closing session on Friday afternoon. Lord Des Browne will deliver a closing keynote address, and former Executive Secretaries Wolfgang Hoffman and Tibor Tóth will reflect on the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO.

The discussions over the next few days will focus on nuclear test monitoring technologies and their various applications. But we are all part of something much bigger.

The progress that we make on the implementation of the CTBT, on both the scientific and diplomatic fronts, will contribute to global efforts to make the world more safe, secure and prosperous.

Thank you.