

**Statement by Dr Lassina Zerbo,
Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Handover Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter

11 February 2016

Mr Chairman,
Ambassador Andereya,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here among friends and colleagues for this year's handover ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter.

I would like to thank Ambassador Andereya for his kind invitation to attend this event and congratulate Ambassador Maruta on his new responsibilities. The G77 represents the majority of the CTBTO's stakeholders. We are committed to serving the Group to the best of our abilities.

Not long ago we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the G-77 and China – now over five decades of global cooperation and multilateralism towards a more prosperous and safer, more secure, world. This year, we commemorate another anniversary that of the CTBT. Designed to address many of the shared concerns that brought the G77 together, the Treaty has become in twenty years a pillar of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Nevertheless, this monumental political achievement and technical accomplishment does not – and should not – hide the stark reality: the fact that, until such time as it enters into force, the CTBT is unfinished business. As I have many times mentioned, unless we finish what we started, there is a risk that we will lose two decades of hard work and fifty to sixty years of negotiations toward a world free from nuclear testing.

The twentieth anniversary of the CTBT should be a time for reflection rather than a cause for celebration. A number of inspiring and stimulating events are planned throughout the year in this context, including a high-level meeting to be held here in Vienna in June. I have no doubt G77 countries will support these activities.

Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now more than ever, as we take stock of the progress achieved and reflect on the means to end nuclear testing for the future generations, we stand ready to redouble our work with you towards these shared objectives.

Let me assure you of my continuous readiness, and that of my staff, to further deepen the partnership that was nurtured by Ambassador Andereya over the past year. I look forward to working with you, Ambassador Maruta, to further enhance the productive and cordial partnership that has always existed between the G-77 and China, and the CTBTO.

Thank you.