



CTBTO
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

PUTTING AN
END TO NUCLEAR
EXPLOSIONS

**Statement to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

Dr Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary

**Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
Geneva, 23 April 2018**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating you, Excellency, on your appointment as Chair of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee. I am sure that with your guidance, discussions here will reach a successful conclusion.

Mr Chairman,

A general theme these days is that rising tensions, fuelled by uncertainty and apprehension, should cause us to call into question the value of the instruments, approaches, and mechanisms we have used to combat weapons of mass destruction. We are frequently invited to consider that the methods used so far are failing, and we are asked to contemplate alternatives.

But in a time of tension we need to focus on what brings *real security*: negotiated agreements that are effectively verifiable and credibly enforceable.

It is in this spirit that I welcome news that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is considering suspending nuclear tests and dismantling its test site as part of a possible negotiated agreement. I believe that the CTBT can play an important, historic, role in this process.

The CTBT can provide the security and certainty needed by solidifying a commitment to turn away from nuclear testing.

As a legally-binding instrument founded on a robust verification system, adherence to the CTBT by all parties concerned is the only way to overcome the trust deficit that is a real impediment to progress on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

I, and the Organization I lead, stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

We are now in the middle of the current NPT review cycle. We have two years to prepare the ground for an outcome to the 2020 Review Conference that proves to the world that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament can be achieved within a clear, rules-based, framework.

It goes without saying that the global political landscape is changing. This is always the case. But let there be no mistake about it. The NPT is our precious inheritance. It is the immovable foundation for a future of peace and security.

Those who brought the NPT into the world in the 1960s showed foresight and resolve. Foresight that the nuclear age required a set of diplomatic and normative tools to prevent the destruction of humanity and the environment, and resolve to strike a long-lasting ‘grand bargain’ to deliver peace and security.

If the NPT is under strain it is not because of a fatal flaw in the instrument itself. It is because not enough has been done to maintain and secure its *entire* chain of responsibilities – of which the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an essential part.

The CTBT was an integral part of the decision made in 1995 to extend the NPT. It provides the international community with a non-discriminatory, verifiable, and legally-binding means to ensure that no nuclear test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, can take place.

The world now has at its disposal the most extensive global monitoring system ever seen. As I speak, hundreds of detection facilities in over 90 countries are gathering and transmitting data to the state-of-the-art International Data Centre in Vienna. Accurate and reliable data on every single nuclear test conducted this century was shared with CTBT States Signatories well within strict timelines.

I also wish to mention that CTBTO analysts are currently working on data related to a natural seismic event that occurred yesterday in the vicinity of the DPRK test site.

Despite this, the unfortunate reality is that – even with 183 signatories and 166 ratifications – the Treaty is yet to enter into force. More than two decades have gone by since the CTBT was opened for signature. More than six have gone by since a nuclear test ban was first mooted.

Some may be tempted to point at the success of the CTBT’s monitoring system and ask: what added value would come from entry into force? But I must be clear. There is simply no way to remove CTBT verification from the CTBT. The Treaty and its Organization are an integral part of a legal regime and are inseparable.

The only means of securing all of its benefits for all time is to bring the Treaty into force. And any attempt to take a selective approach would have a profoundly detrimental affect on the entire nuclear non-proliferation architecture.

Moreover, action on the Treaty would provide the impetus for progress that we need to see in the NPT review cycle. Given that CTBT verification is up and running and that there is a de-facto global

moratorium on nuclear tests, entry into force is the most effective disarmament measure within the grasp of the international community.

All States have the responsibility to pass on hard-won gains such as the NPT and CTBT to future generations. Let us not be distracted by any negative voices who claim that our goals cannot be achieved.

On the contrary, we must always be watchful and ready for opportunities that arise.

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Our challenge is not to re-think the very value of the NPT or of the multilateral approach; rather it is to put it back on track. Diplomacy, backed up by rigorous science-based verification tools, remains the key to unlocking real security.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference is our opportunity. We must take great care to preserve the integrity of the NPT across all its pillars and to identify any and all means of moving forward on our shared agenda. CTBT entry into force is the most practical and achievable step we can take together.

Thank you.