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Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization**

**Hiroshima GEM Meeting  
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I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the generous offer of His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, to host a Meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons here in Hiroshima. The Government of Japan is a true leader in its support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as in broader nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. As the only country to experience the horrifying consequences of atomic bombings – the seventieth anniversary of which I was humbled to participate in earlier this month – Japan plays a unique and immeasurable moral and leadership role in international efforts to realize a world free of nuclear testing.

A nuclear test ban has been an objective of the international community for decades. However, the Treaty's negotiation and opening for signature were only possible following the close of the Cold War, amidst fresh optimism over prospects for nuclear disarmament. With regional tensions on the rise in many corners of the world, there is no better time than the present to redouble our efforts for the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT, and thereby secure one significant step towards international peace and security.

The agreement between the EU + 3 and Iran over its nuclear programme has injected a much needed dose of positivity and hope into what is too often viewed as an impossible struggle. Achieving meaningful progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament will continue to pose great challenges to leaders of all stripes hoping to bring about a more stable and secure international environment. But what the Iran deal teaches us is that multilateralism in arms control and international security is not only possible, but the most effective way of addressing the complex and multi-layered challenges of the 21st century. Multilateral diplomacy at the highest political level

The Iran deal also teaches us that the measure of worth in any security agreement or arms control Treaty is in the credibility of its verification provisions. As with the Iran deal, the utility of the CTBT must be judged on the effectiveness of its verification and enforcement mechanisms. In this area, there can be no question. The verification system of the CTBT is not only more sensitive than was thought possible twenty years ago, the capabilities will continue to improve as new monitoring technologies and data processing methods are brought on line. And this is a multilateral effort in all its dimensions. Multilateralism in arms control verification is the only tried and true means of ensuring credible results, and the CTBT is emblematic of this reality in both letter and spirit.

There is nowhere other than this region where the urgency of achieving the Treaty's entry into force is more evident, and there is no group better equipped with the experience and expertise to help further this cause than the Group of Eminent Persons. The GEM includes former Secretaries of Defence, current and former Foreign Ministers, former UN Under-Secretaries General, and distinguished Ambassadors, parliamentarians, counsellors and advisors on non-proliferation and international security.

Although we all come from different backgrounds, each of us is committed to the objectives of enhancing international peace and security. I am confident that the discussions at the Hiroshima GEM Meeting over the next two days will help to identify opportunities for multilateral engagement that can facilitate progress toward universalization and entry into force of the Treaty.

With unyielding determination and commitment from the members of the Group of Eminent Persons and CTBT-supportive countries such as Japan, I am confident that we will succeed in our goal of achieving a world free from the threat of nuclear testing.

Thank you.