



CTBTO
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

PUTTING AN
END TO NUCLEAR
EXPLOSIONS

**Statement to the Third 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
New York, 29 April 2019**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Mr Chairman,

As we move into the last phase of this NPT review cycle, I understand very well the temptation to give in to cynicism where the nuclear non-proliferation architecture is concerned. But the message I want to deliver is that there *is* good news to share and there *are* valuable assets we can build on.

It is true that there are differing viewpoints on the way forward, and that divisions between the NPT States Parties have so far persisted in the lead up to the 2020 Review Conference.

However, even if disagreements exist, we must not forget that the NPT *has* succeeded in preventing a massive expansion of nuclear weapons-capable States over the past half century. Through norm-setting and evolving verification standards, tools and techniques, the NPT significantly reduces the risk of nuclear proliferation.

With that in mind, we must do what we can to safeguard what has been achieved.

That said, we must also recall that the Treaty was and is built the ‘grand bargain’ between States on the NPT’s three pillars: nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. If the NPT is under strain, it is because more must be done to strengthen its entire web of responsibilities.

Delivering on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is key to this. The links between the CTBT and NPT are very strong. Over the years, the CTBT has played a critical role in the NPT review process. It was an integral part of the decision made in 1995 to extend the NPT. Its negotiation

and opening for signature brought confidence to the international community that progress could be made.

And the confidence we bring has only grown as the CTBT verification regime has been built up. Today, there are over 300 International Monitoring System installations positioned around the globe, sending data to the International Data Centre in Vienna.

In fact, the CTBTO already provides a level of nuclear test detection capability that few thought would be possible when the Treaty was first negotiated.

The performance of the verification regime ensures that no State can confidently carry out a nuclear test explosion without detection. After each of the six tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), accurate and timely data was provided to States, and briefings were held within hours of the explosions.

This is the good news. The CTBT is not a theoretical treaty: it has a real impact. Signatures and ratifications continue to accrue: with Zimbabwe ratifying recently, the Treaty now has 184 signatories, of which 168 have ratified. This is no mean feat for an arms control instrument.

However, the unfortunate reality is that the Treaty is yet to enter into force. And powerful expressions of support for the CTBT at this PrepCom – as welcome as they are – will not suffice. It is time to put words into action.

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Even before entry into force, the contribution of the CTBT to international peace and security is there for all to see. And the potential is greater still.

The enduring nuclear crisis in the Korean Peninsula presents a unique opportunity for the international community to seize upon the extraordinary potential of the CTBT and the CTBTO.

As a complement to the possible roles of other organizations, the legal framework of the CTBT and the CTBTO's technical capabilities and expertise can contribute significantly, should States so wish. This belongs to the global community for the greater good. A side-event here in the Trusteeship Council chamber on Wednesday will explore the potential contributions of the CTBT to DPRK denuclearization efforts, and I encourage everyone to attend.

Some may be tempted to point at the CTBTO's successes in its preparatory phase and ask: what added value would come from entry into force? But – and I have said this before – CTBT verification cannot be removed from the CTBT. The only means of securing all of its benefits for all time is to bring the Treaty into force.

Moreover, action on the Treaty would provide the 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.

Let us not be distracted by cynicism. All States have the responsibility to pass on hard-won gains such as the NPT and CTBT to future generations.

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

The 2020 NPT Review Conference is our opportunity to overcome divisions. Rather than allowing negativity to diminish our resolve, we must work together with shared resolve.

We need determined leadership to preserve the integrity of the NPT across each and every one of its pillars and to identify how to move forward on our shared agenda. Progress on the CTBT is the most practical and achievable step we can take together.

Thank you.