

**Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Executive Secretary Dr Lassina Zerbo

Address to the Conference on Disarmament

**Council Chamber, Palais des Nations
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Introduction

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me first of all to thank you, Madam President, for your warm welcome. It is an honour to be here. I am especially pleased to follow His Excellency Minister Fatemi and to have had the benefit of hearing his considered statement on Pakistan's position concerning the issues facing the Conference on Disarmament.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference and to all Delegations for inviting me to speak today.

The Conference on Disarmament and the CTBT

For any Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), it is a unique privilege to address the Conference on Disarmament.

In fact, it is a sort of homecoming.

It was here, almost twenty years ago, that the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) were concluded. This followed two years of intense deliberation in the CD, and many years before that of preparatory work laying the foundations for the CTBT's verification regime.

The conclusion of negotiations and the adoption of the Treaty by the General Assembly was an historic moment and an outstanding achievement. The CTBT was the result of a shared

vision, painstaking effort, and the goodwill and spirit of compromise that is the lifeblood of multilateral agreements.

From 1994 to 1996, the Conference created a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument that is unprecedented in history. It brought diplomacy and science together in a way that no treaty on nuclear weapons issues had before. It created a legitimate and non-discriminatory means of banning, detecting, and monitoring signs of nuclear explosions.

Looking back, the early-to-mid-1990s seem like a golden era in disarmament. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) also resulted from this time. When I spoke at The Hague two weeks ago to mark OPCW Day, I remarked that both of us – the CTBTO and the OPCW – are sister organizations. And that would make the Conference on Disarmament our mother.

Of course the two sister organizations have taken different paths since then. OPCW Day is a recent initiative centred on the anniversary of the CWC's entry into force. Next year that Treaty will reach its twentieth year of adulthood. Meanwhile the CTBT remains stunted in its growth, despite the fact that its verification regime is fully operational. I will return to this in a moment.

Madam President,

Everyone in this Chamber is very familiar with the changed atmosphere since the 1990s. This has affected the entire field of disarmament and non-proliferation and has deeply impacted on your work as Members of the Conference.

I believe that the mandate of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and non-proliferation, and the special expertise and the quality of diplomatic representation here, remain a rich resource that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

However, for nearly 20 years, the CD has been unable to fulfil its important mandate. And experience teaches us that if a void is perceived on such an important issue, something will arise to fill it.

No doubt all of you were disappointed that the 2015 NPT Review Conference could not reach a consensus on its final document, despite being very close to it. Taken together with the unfortunate impasse in the CD, this has spilled over into frustration.

Trust and confidence are the key elements in order to achieve progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We must take great care to preserve the integrity of the institutions and instruments we have, and to build trust on them and around them.

This means maintaining and securing the NPT and its entire web of responsibilities – of which CTBT entry into force is an integral part. And it also means re-igniting faith in the CD.

Just as I am optimistic when it comes to the CTBT, I am optimistic about the CD too. It may not be easy, but I believe you will be able to take the decisions necessary to restore the kind of dynamism that brought about the CWC and the CTBT. That is the need of the hour.

We all continue to look to this Conference with great expectation. Making substantial and concrete progress on non-proliferation and security issues is crucial to international peace and security.

In many cases this means difficult choices that require leadership, courage and determination. Recent history has shown us that progress is possible. We have seen Syria join the global ban on chemical weapons, and we have seen the JCPOA with Iran under implementation.

Is it really so far-fetched to imagine the CD working actively on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty? Is it beyond all imagination to see this Conference finish what we started by completing the building blocks of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime?

I believe not. And I know that, in this Chamber, I am not alone in that belief.

Twentieth anniversary: Finish what we started

Speaking of finishing what we started, twenty years without entry into force of the CTBT is simply twenty years too long. Throughout the course of 2016, we in the CTBTO are commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty.

We have organized a number of events in this context, culminating in a Ministerial Meeting on June 13 in Vienna. The Foreign Ministers of many delegations represented here have already indicated that they will attend.

I have consistently avoided calling this a “celebration”. It’s not that we are not proud of what we have achieved. Over the past twenty years we have built up the world’s only reliable and multilaterally verifiable means of monitoring and detecting nuclear explosions. But 2016 is also the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty not being in force. Instead of celebrating, it is a time for action.

The CTBT verification regime is largely in place. The Treaty has 183 States Signatories. 164 of these have also ratified. Nevertheless, we still need ratifications by 8 remaining countries listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty before the nuclear test ban is a legal reality.

I am often asked about prospects for completing these ratifications, and I am happy to share my thoughts in just a few moments. Of course there are others in this Chamber who would feel more qualified to do so where some of these cases are concerned!

Right now, the current status of the organizational framework of the CTBTO does not do justice to the work we carry out.

We have reached a high level of operational readiness, as illustrated by the Field Exercise held in Jordan in 2014, the most complete simulation of an OSI we have held to date.

The added value of the CTBTO's International Monitoring System (IMS) has also been demonstrated through the provision of data for tsunami early warning and in the response to the tragic events in Fukushima in 2011.

So the Organization is ready. What is missing is an in-force Treaty. And you, the Members of the Conference of Disarmament, have a special responsibility to bring the treaty into force. Moving forward on the CTBT would help create momentum on other, related, issues. It would rebuild trust among parties to the NPT. And it would re-invigorate the work of the CD.

Prospects for the CTBT: Reasons to be Optimistic

This brings me to the prospects of bringing in the remaining Annex 2 States. As I said, I am often asked about this. Sometimes I have the feeling that people expect me to be disillusioned. But how can I be?

After all, I see the value that we have already created: an almost complete end to nuclear tests, and a whole range of civil and scientific applications resulting from IMS data.

And we receive backing for the Treaty from countries all around the world, from different regions and groupings. Let's remember that the one bright light in the 2015 NPT Review Conference was the widespread support expressed for CTBT entry into force.

In addition, we are constantly uplifted by the enthusiasm for the Treaty from civil society, academia, and – most important of all – the next generation. I recently established a CTBTO Youth Group that is full of bright, eager young persons who are determined to make the nuclear test a legally-binding reality.

The key thing is not to miss any opportunities, anywhere. Now let me give some examples of where we see real potential for progress.

DPRK

I wish to start with perhaps the most difficult case. North Korea remains the only country to have conducted nuclear tests this century. Its fourth announced nuclear test in January this year reminded us all of the clear line between testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We have to keep in mind that each additional test brings a degree of learning. This poses a great threat with regard to potential transfers or sales of fissile material and tangible and intangible nuclear "assets" to third parties.

The North Korean leadership has unfortunately continued its declared nuclear policy. But I believe we should not close the door to dialogue with North Korea. We should at least seek to bring the country towards a *moratorium* on nuclear testing. This would be a first step towards at least a de-escalation of the current crisis.

How can this be achieved? The success of the P5+1 talks with Iran showed that diplomacy can resolve difficult issues. This cooperation could spark similar success in talks with the DPRK.

I have no wish to isolate North Korea on the nuclear testing issue. On the contrary, I have consistently promoted engagement. For example, an invitation to attend the CTBT Ministerial Meeting in June has been extended to Mr Su Yong Ri, the Foreign Minister of the DPRK.

The Middle East

In the Middle East, there is also potential for progress. The dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons is a clear demonstration that things can change. Although Syria's ratification of the CTBT is not necessary for entry into force, I still regret that the opportunity was missed to bring them into the nuclear test ban at that point.

In fact, no new signatures in the region are required for the Treaty to enter into force. But we still need Egypt, Iran, and Israel to complete their ratification procedures. All of them have signed the CTBT. In that respect, they have already indicated their support for a ban on nuclear testing.

One idea that has re-emerged over the last few months is the establishment of a nuclear-test-free zone in the region. As you all know, the establishment of a Middle East WMD-free-zone has stalled. It continues to be one of the chief challenges in the NPT process. A nuclear-test-free zone could be a building block towards the establishment of the WMD free zone.

I see such a zone taking shape through joint ratification of the CTBT by these countries. All have signed the Treaty, so ratification does not require any policy U-turns. And it would help build much-needed confidence among the main regional actors.

A number of voices have lent their support to this idea. And I am willing to help in any way I can.

South Asia

We still need India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the CTBT. I believe there is room to establish a framework for dialogue on the Treaty in South Asia.

We have had some success in engaging with Indian and Pakistani scientists through our series of Science and Technology Conferences, as well as Scientist-to-Scientist workshops. Concentrating on the technical aspects of the verification regime, including the civil and scientific applications of the monitoring technologies, is a sensible way forward.

Some people claim that there is an “allergy” to the CTBT in South Asia. But I’ve never heard anyone sneezing. If we are serious about bringing the Treaty into force, we should not miss out on any opportunities for engagement.

China, United States

Last but not least by any means, the two P5 members who have yet to ratify: China and the United States. Both are Signatories, and both have consistently re-affirmed their strong commitment to the Treaty.

It is frequently said that US ratification would be the game changer needed to bring along the others. I am sure it would be significant, but I do not believe in playing the waiting game. While the current Administration continues its efforts in domestic education and outreach on the benefits of the CTBT, there is still scope to seek progress elsewhere.

Conclusion

Madam President,

With adequate trust and confidence, multilateralism can be the most effective tool for the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It can satisfy the interests of both individual nations and the international community as a whole.

Twenty years after the opening for signature of the CTBT, it still remains unfinished business. And the CD has business of its own to finish as well. As we look ahead to the next NPT Review Conference in 2020, we need to bring back trust into the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Action on the CTBT provides an excellent opportunity to overcome the hurdles we face.

Let’s move forward together.

Thank you.