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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS

29 August 2017

Each year, on 29 August, we observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests to respect the victims of the past and to remind the world of the persisting threat these tests pose to the environment and international stability.

More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted over the past seven decades – from the South Pacific to North America, from Central Asia to North Africa. They have harmed some of the world's most vulnerable peoples and pristine ecosystems.

To ensure that no States can conduct another test, it is essential that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) finally enters into force. Just eight more Annex 2 States need to ratify to accomplish this.

I urge all countries yet to join the CTBT to do so as soon as possible. For almost 20 years, a global norm has existed against nuclear testing based on voluntarily unilateral moratoriums. I applaud this restraint, but it is not enough. Continued nuclear tests by the Democratic Republic of Korea demonstrate that even the strongest norm is no substitute for a legally-binding prohibition.

Last year, the Security Council adopted its first resolution focused solely on nuclear testing. I hope that represents a new momentum towards taking the essential next step in ridding the world of the menace of nuclear weapons.