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**STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. HAMID BAEIDINEJAD  
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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
AT THE CTBT MINISTERIAL MEETING  
Vienna, 13 June 2016**

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption as the Chairperson of this important meeting.

We would also like to thank the Executive Secretary, Mr. Lassina Zerbo, and his colleagues at the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) for organizing this meeting and assisting other partners in holding the side events.

Mr. Chairman,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been a long aspiration of the international community and a viable reaction to the nuclear arms race at the initial phase of the nuclear age. The CTBT conclusion was therefore welcomed by the international community. At this juncture, at the 20th CTBT anniversary we can be happy to generally assess that nuclear test explosions have been considerably reduced and merit of this reduction can be attributed to the CTBT. Let's wish that CTBT puts an end to all nuclear explosive tests for all time.

We, however, have and have had more expectation from this treaty to achieve. Many Non-Aligned countries including my country signed the Treaty in New York with the hope that the CTBT would contribute to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We were hopeful that the conclusion of this Treaty would prevent the qualitative as well as quantitative development of nuclear weapons. The CTBT in its preamble clearly stresses on the need for continued systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the goal of eliminating those weapons.

Unfortunately, the Nuclear Weapon States have interpreted the Treaty in a narrow manner and have perceived the treaty as an instrument to ban only explosive tests and through this interpretation have continued to improve their

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nuclear arsenals through non-explosive nuclear testing. We believe this interpretation is clearly against the spirit of the treaty.

We believe that Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs) should bear the main responsibility in entry into force of the CTBT by taking lead in the ratification of the Treaty. In our view, if the objective of the Treaty were to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States Signatories, especially the Nuclear Weapon States, to nuclear disarmament would be essential. We strongly call upon all Nuclear Weapon States to observe the spirit and letter of the CTBT. Furthermore, we call upon all parties who have not joined the NPT would join this treaty without delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Banning the development of nuclear weapons is vital in the region of the Middle East. It is of a major concern that Israel the only party in the region which has not joined the NPT, continues to pursue this policy. In this vein, we believe that we all should support and assure the establishment of new zones in the regions where they do not exist, in particular in the Middle East, including through full and prompt implementation of the 1995 Resolution and the 2010 NPT Plan of Action on the Middle East, and above all convening, as soon as possible, of the conference on the establishment of such a zone.

Mr. Chairman,

My country was the first to express the concern that imposing to create an artificial regional grouping as the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) in the text of the CTBT, in contravention with the tradition of the United Nations grouping, would lead to a negative polarization in the working environment before and after Entry into Force (EIF) of the Treaty. It is regretful that this has proved right and consequently this situation has prevented a large group of signatories to normally contribute to the CTBTO discussions in Vienna through the group. The last 20 years, should have been sufficient to prove that this major deficiency should be rectified.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, reiterating the commitment of my Government to the objectives of the CTBT, once again, we express our support to the activities of the PTS and the Executive Secretary.

Thank you.