

Statement by Mr. Tibor Toth,
Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission
on the occasion of the
Fourtieth Anniversary of the
Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the
Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)
Mexico City, February 14th, 2007

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a great honor and pleasure for me to celebrate with you this symbolic anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as a historical achievement. It contributed greatly to peace and stability in your region, it fostered confidence and cooperation and it provided a successful example for other initiatives to create Nuclear Weapon Free Zones.
2. While all of us are rightly concerned about the prevailing threat of nuclear proliferation and the continuous lack of progress in nuclear disarmament, the Treaty of Tlatelolco provides us with an example of true success and progress in this area.
3. Big historical achievements are made possible by a combination of visionary leadership and the right circumstances. This leadership to achieve a denuclearization of the Continent was provided in the aftermath of the Cuban Missiles Crisis by several states, among them Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico. However, I would like to pay special tribute to Alfonso Garcia Robles who was so instrumental in turning this vision into reality.
4. As a young diplomat participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in the early 1980s, I remember the forceful speeches of Alfonso Garcia Robles putting all his moral weight as key architect of the Tlatelolco Treaty into underscoring the urgency for nuclear disarmament and to fight the proliferation of nuclear weapons. One of the issues he spoke of frequently and with deep conviction was the need for a multilateral treaty prohibiting nuclear tests in any environment. Probably only few besides him believed

that a decade after he had received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1982, negotiations would start and lead so swiftly to a treaty.

5. This year marks the 25th anniversary of acknowledging with the Nobel Peace Prize the dedication and perseverance of Alfonso Garcia Robles. This is the right moment to pay tribute to his visionary statesmanship, even more since we recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the CTBT, the treaty which was called the *“hardest fought price in the history of arms control negotiations”*. As of today, 177 States have signed and 138 have ratified the CTBT. Since 1997, the Preparatory Commission has been working to build up a credible, functional and cost effective verification system to underpin the norm against nuclear testing established by the Treaty. It is a unique feature of the participatory and democratic CTBT verification regime that it empowers each and every State, regardless of its size and wealth, to fully participate in the verification work and to benefit from the wealth of data and data products provided by the monitoring system.
6. In addition to the primary purpose of verification, the CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional scientific and civilian benefits. Our data can be used in a variety of fields, including studies of the earth’s structure as well as for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, underwater explosion location, the monitoring of the sea temperature and climate change. In addition, we are providing our data in real time to tsunami warning systems.

Distinguished guests,

7. The norm against nuclear testing was severely challenged last year, when the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea announced that it had conducted a nuclear test on 9 October 2006. This resulted in practically unanimous global expressions of concern and condemnation, in particular also from the Contracting States of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, with regard to this irresponsible act. This strong reaction of the international community was important and demonstrated impressively how much the international community cares about the nuclear test ban.
8. The explosion was a test for our organization, our technical capabilities, our own procedures and the potential value that our global verification system can bring to States Signatories in a

situation of such political importance. I am pleased that we were able to provide States Signatories with reliable data and to prove the value of the significant investment that has been made into the CTBT verification system.

9. While it is primarily for those states listed in Annex 2 of the CTBT whose ratification is necessary for entry into force to consider the value of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty for their national and for international security, it is also a collective responsibility of all states to do whatever they can to contribute to strengthening the norm of the Treaty.

10. I would like to use today's opportunity to appeal to all Contracting States of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to support the CTBT and the upholding of the norm against nuclear testing. In particular, I would like to appeal to those Contracting States that are already committed under Article 1 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco *to prohibit and prevent the testing of any nuclear weapons* and that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to do so at their earliest convenience.

11. Finally, Madam Minister, I would like to use this occasion to express my appreciation for your contribution to the cause of the Treaty and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, and for the contribution of so many gifted Mexican diplomats, colleagues present here.

Thank you for your attention