



**Opening of the Exhibition
“Towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”**

**Message by the Executive Secretary
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Dr Lassina Zerbo

Vienna, 17 November 2015

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Mayor Matsui,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This year I participated in the dignified 70th commemorations of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Visiting those cities, meeting survivors and talking to students was an eye-opener to me.

Known as the *Hibakusha* their testimony once again put into sharp focus for me the threat posed by nuclear weapons. The *Hibakusha* will unfortunately not be with us forever to pass on their experience to the younger generation which is why exhibits such as this one are so important.

Abstract terms like “deterrence” or “strategic balance” fade into nothing when we see the deformed and scorched artefacts in this exhibition. They attest to the hell that was unleashed on the men, women and children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Seeing this exhibition, it becomes clear to everyone why Pope Francis condemned nuclear weapons as immoral and called upon world leaders at the United Nations in September to work for their abolition.

We all share the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and indeed the voices for this grow stronger every day. However, we should remember that we do not yet have even a nuclear-test free world. This objective – a vital concrete step towards nuclear disarmament – is within

reach if States show political leadership and move forward in a determined manner through effective multilateral collaboration.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Unfortunately the *Hibakusha* were not the last to suffer from the effects of nuclear explosions. Over 2,000 nuclear tests were conducted until 1996, when the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted. The combined explosive yield of these tests equalled one 13 kiloton Hiroshima-sized bomb exploding, on average, every 53 hours.

Throughout these years, nuclear testing had a dangerous and destabilizing impact on global security, and exacted a terrible cost on human health and the environment. Here we are again not speaking of hypothetical or abstract concerns. To lose sight of the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or the Marshall Islands and Semipalatinsk, is to depart from our own humanity.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The good news is that the world has become too civilized for nuclear testing. The only country to still engage in this activity in our century is North Korea, further deepening its international isolation. We also have a system in place, the CTBTO's International Monitoring System, which provides confidence to countries that no nuclear test will escape detection.

On the other hand, the CTBT's entry into force continues to elude us, even as the Treaty approaches its 20th anniversary. Without the CTBT in force, there is no guarantee that nuclear testing and a related arms race will not resume, especially in today's frostier security climate. The impact of such a scenario would be disastrous in many ways.

It is most fitting that Japan, together with Kazakhstan – whose people continue to be affected by the hundreds of nuclear tests conducted at the Semipalatinsk test site – are spearheading international efforts to bring the CTBT into force in the period 2015 to 2017. Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov chaired the Article XIV Conference to facilitate the CTBT's entry into force on 29 September in New York. Less than a month ago, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev issued a strongly worded joint statement in support of the CTBT.

If Japan and Kazakhstan can inspire the same passion and urgency for nuclear disarmament in other countries, I am certain that we can achieve the CTBT's entry into force. Not so much as a goal in itself, but because this will be the world's first concrete step – the name of this exhibition says it all – *Towards a world free of nuclear weapons*.

Thank you.