

**STATEMENT BY PR OF KAZAKHSTAN,
AMBASSADOR KAIRAT ABDRAKHMANOV
ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS
10 September 2015, New York, UN**

*Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I warmly thank H.E. President Sam Kutesa for convening this Informal Meeting and for his insightful statement, and the Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon for honouring us with his presence and his leadership in nuclear disarmament. On behalf of my Government, I also welcome and express sincerest gratitude to the distinguished panelists and moderator. I would like to offer my thanks to UNODA, DPI and DGACM for their excellent cooperation and support in making this observance such a success.

Ladies and Gentleman,

29 August 1991 is a milestone in the modern history books and, I hope, will remain eternally so. This is the day when Kazakhstan closed the Nuclear Test Site in Semipalatinsk - the second largest in the world. That and the renunciation of our nuclear arsenal - the fourth largest in the world, were unprecedented acts to demonstrate to the world that it does not need powerful nuclear tests and weapons. Semipalatinsk led the way for the closure of other sites in Nevada, Novaya Zemlya, Lop Nur, Moruroa, Kiribati and others.

Later on, the General Assembly had adopted the relevant resolution, we initiated. We are thankful to the co-sponsors of our resolution, and to all the Member States, for unanimously designating this important Day.

Distinguished colleagues,

The easiest way for me as the representative of Kazakhstan is to deliver now a strong enough statement with horrifying statistics on how many tests were conducted above the ground and atmosphere or how many people were exposed to the deadly radiation. Believe me, figures are not simply impressive but compelling and call for immediate action for banning nuclear tests and going towards a nuclear-weapon-free world for the benefit of our ordinary compatriots, who passed through dramatic tests for survival, the one and only in their life.

From that perspective, the vivid example of nuclear survival is Mr. Karipbek Kuyukov, the Goodwill Ambassador of the ATOM project - a worldwide e-campaign, calling on world leaders to end nuclear tests, once and for all - who is himself a victim of nuclear radiation, who has come specially to New York from Kazakhstan. He is present in this Chamber to share briefly his life experiences with us.

The life of Karipbek and example of Kazakhstan as a whole proves that it is possible to accomplish any mission given that there are the responsible and visionary leadership in the name of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, a multiethnic and multi confessional population of a tolerant nature and reliable partnership with East and West. Let me remind the distinguished audience that, in fact, the entire territory of Kazakhstan was one big polygon, comprising of 11 units spread over my country. Besides nuclear, these included also air, space, missile defense and warning systems, as well as high-power laser weapons test sites. Among them, I would like to mention even the deadly biochemical and bacteriological weapons tested in the Aral Sea, which was the Barkhan (meaning Dune) Test Site on the former Renaissance Island. Kazakhstan thus has the full right to call for the universal and prompt steps leading to the *Path to Zero*.

Distinguished colleagues,

Permit me now to give some outstanding examples. We have not been alone on this way and have been enjoying excellent cooperation and partnership with major stakeholders and world powers:

1. When our country became the “epicenter of the world” after renouncing its nuclear arsenal, it was the collaboration with the Russian Federation and the U.S. that made possible the removal and disposal of our nuclear warheads and missiles, as well as the destruction and decommissioning of the former test site infrastructure.

2. Kazakhstan, along with other countries of the region, established the Central Asian Nuclear-Free-Zone with the signing of the Treaty of Semipalatinsk in 2006, which speedily came into force in 2009. In May 2014, representatives of the “nuclear five” (the P5) signed a Protocol on negative security assurances to the participant states of that Treaty, of which four have already ratified it. This year, the Central Asian states adopted an Action Plan to strengthen nuclear security in the region. Now we are elaborating regional instruments for the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and combating nuclear terrorism.

3. Last year, we worked to ensure the safety and preservation of hundreds of kilograms of nuclear material, remaining in the galleries at the Massif Degelen, also known as Plutonium Mountain, located at the former Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site. This measure will prevent leakage and improper use of these materials. The constant and perennial trilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan, Russia and the United States, was announced in Seoul in 2012 by the Presidents of those three countries. It is a striking proof that only a spirit of trust and mutual understanding will make our world secure. Today, Kazakhstan is actively working to prepare for the Fourth Summit to be held in 2016 Washington, D.C., by hosting a preparatory Sherpas Meeting this 2-4 November in Almaty.

4. Another significant achievement has been the Agreement signed two weeks ago in Astana, on 27 August, by the Government of Kazakhstan and the International Atomic Energy Agency for establishing the International Bank of Low-Enriched Uranium in 2017 in Eastern Kazakhstan. This initiative is yet a concrete contribution of Kazakhstan in strengthening the non-proliferation regime, and eliminating lacunae existing in the international legal framework. The Bank will allow Member States the right to reliable access to fuel for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It was once more the collaboration between the East and West, particularly, Kazakhstan, the P5, as well as the EU, Norway, Kuwait and the UAE - as the donors of the project - that the Bank came into reality.

5. A most recent and current example of cooperation is related to the unique Cosmodrome “Baikonur” located in Kazakhstan - the only site in the world from where space crafts are launched to the International Space Station. It was just eight days ago, on 2 September 2015, that spacecraft “Soyuz” was launched with a new crew, comprising of Kazakh, Russian and first ever Danish cosmonauts representing the European Space Agency. I would like to offer our warmest and special congratulations to our incoming President of the General Assembly who adds glory to the Kingdom of Denmark and Europe as a whole.

This example too should inspire us to work together with hope for the future. Even in spite some current turbulences in the relations between big players, the above-mentioned stories serve as best prove of possibility to find solution to any critical issue of any scale in the world.

It is the collective responsibility and commitment of everyone, to step up anti-tests and anti-nuclear weapons momentum to find and implement such peaceful solutions so that we do not forget our common humanity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite being the largest producer and supplier of uranium in the world, Kazakshstan’s irrevocable refusal to join the “nuclear club” proves that harmony and cooperation can be stronger armaments for global peace and security than any weaponry. Disarmament critics still insist that nuclear weapons cannot be dis-invented and that the nuclear genie is well out of the bottle. Kazakhstan and several other countries have proved that it is within our power to put this monstrous genie back into the bottle.

Kazakhstan was amongst the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). My country is committed to the Treaty, and so along with Japan, later this month, on 29 September 2015, will co-chair the International Conference on Article XIV to CTBT and strive to bring its entry into force.

Today, a new impetus is needed to move the disarmament machinery forward, considering that the 2015 NPT Review Conference did not fulfill its anticipated outcome. We commend the three meetings held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, and the many unilateral, bilateral and collective efforts of several countries, together with the dynamism of civil society. These serve as wake-up calls to unite for a nuclear-weapon-free world. We, therefore, welcome the momentum gained by the “Humanitarian Pledge” put forward by Austria, which Kazakhstan and many others have endorsed.

Likewise, we seek your support at the forthcoming First Committee Meeting this October for the initiative of our President for the international community to adopt the *Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World*. We do not consider this document as the basis for a major debate or tying down the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its value lies in the fact that, despite ongoing disagreements on the means to achieve nuclear disarmament, there is full agreement on the fundamental goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Distinguished delegates,

Finally, I would like to quote President Nazarbayev, who at the Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague reminded the world saying that “General and complete nuclear disarmament is the only guarantee of nuclear security. We should all live up to the responsibility we have, to our citizens and the global community – to deliver political rather than military solutions in the name of international peace”.

This is the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations and start of a transformative Post-2015 development agenda. We must thus the political will to invest vast resources liberated by nuclear disarmament to meet compelling human needs and achieve a peaceful and secure world.

Thank you.