

**Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov
at the CTBTO Youth Group and Group of Eminent Persons
International Conference under theme of
«Remembering the past, looking to the future»
(29 August 2018, Astana)**

**Dear Executive Secretary, Dr. Lassina Zerbo!
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

It is my pleasure to welcome you all here in Kazakhstan. I would like to especially commend the participation of the distinguished members of the Group of Eminent Persons and the representatives of the Youth Group.

We are gathering today on the 29th of August, the day proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests at the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev.

It is a symbolic day for Kazakhstan and we use this date not only remember the tragic consequences of nuclear testing but to join efforts of like-minded states, civil society representatives and individuals to build a future free from nuclear threat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While remembering the past we should never forget its painful moments. Therefore, I wish to begin today's event by paying tribute to all the men, women and children who suffered or lost their lives as the result of nuclear testing.

I would ask you to join us in this **minute of silence** to pray for, mourn and remember the victims of nuclear testing.

Minute of silence

Distinguished participants,

From year to year the 29th of August is growing in its prominence. Last year Astana hosted a major Pugwash conference combined with the launch of an IAEA low enriched uranium bank. This year, thanks to efforts of our friend Dr. Lassina Zerbo, we have you, a brilliant mix of wisdom, experience and youthful aspiration. And on the 6th of September the UN General Assembly will convene a first ever high-level meeting to commemorate the 29th of August.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

A historic decision by the President of Kazakhstan to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was a strong political message that eventually contributed to the international efforts to adopt the CTBT in 1996.

Over the years, Kazakhstan has provided strong support for the CTBTO and demonstrated determination to achieve its goals. Kazakhstan was not only the first country in the world to legally ban nuclear tests, but also gave up the fourth biggest nuclear weapons arsenal.

As a country fully committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons, Kazakhstan recognizes the importance of the entry into force of the CTBT as a necessary step towards reaching that goal.

In this regard, Dr. Zerbo and I issued today a Joint Statement on the occasion of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, where we reaffirmed our commitment to the entry into force of the CTBT. I wish to commend Dr. Zerbo and his staff for their tireless efforts in promoting the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT, as well as strengthening the Treaty's verification regime.

For the last 22 years the CTBT has been a beacon of hope. However, as stated recently by the UN Secretary General global peace yet remains elusive. Lack of common political will is the main obstacle on our path towards a nuclear free world.

In this regard we closely follow the latest developments in around the Korean peninsula started with the Inter-Korean Summit and the first US-DPRK meeting and hope that these events can lead to a full denuclearization of the peninsula. Positive developments in that part of the world may become a breakthrough for the CTBT and Kazakhstan, with its unique experience of abandoning nuclear weapons, eliminating military infrastructure and choosing a stable and prosperous future, stands ready to assist.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our joint initiative with Dr. Zerbo to bring together the Youth Group and Group of Eminent Persons helps to examine the role of the CTBT in strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

It is my sincere hope that your deliberations today and tomorrow will further enhance existing global efforts to bring attention to the necessity of early entry into force of the CTBT in the interests of sustainable peace and security. In this respect the professional experience of the GEM and their influence is vital.

Dear representatives of the Youth Group,

Global security and a safe future for coming generations can only be guaranteed when the world is completely free from the nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan strongly believes that national security of the states can be maintained through cooperation and mutual trust. By renouncing its nuclear legacy,

Kazakhstan has helped the international community to see that a world free of nuclear weapons is achievable.

I invite you to refer to Kazakhstan's experience in order to encourage respective governments and parliaments, who have not done so, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We intend to work actively at all levels in order to achieve our common objectives, including with the civil society. This will include working with the international project, ATOM (*stands for: Abolish Testing is Our Mission*), which was launched by Kazakhstan in 2012. Its mission lies in strengthening global support for a complete ban of nuclear weapons testing. We call onto everyone to sign the ATOM Project online petition, which urges to permanently ban nuclear testing.

The ATOM Project and its Honorary Ambassador and artist Karipbek Kuyukov have done a lot to tell the world of those consequences, and I would urge everybody to spread that message.

As a step further we encourage states to pledge their support to the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan signed the TPNW on March 2, 2018 and is currently preparing for its ratification.

Our future is in the hands of youth. Your valuable contribution and active involvement will be helpful at raising further public awareness of the dangerous consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

Dear Ladies and gentlemen,

Kazakhstan is firmly convinced that the key to global security is nuclear weapon free world. It is worth noting that a universal and effectively verifiable Treaty constitutes a fundamental instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan will continue to support the objectives of the CTBT and I would like to express our firm support for the activities of the Executive Secretary of CTBTO. We are ready to be involved in the engagements to reach our major goal - the entry into force of the Treaty.

Thank you for your attention.