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## **Seventh Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting**

### **Address by the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

**Dr Lassina Zerbo**

*New York, 26 September 2014*

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Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Friends of the CTBT, and in particular to the Governments of Australia and Japan, for convening this Seventh Ministerial Meeting with the cooperation of the Co-Presidents of the Article XIV Conference, Hungary and Indonesia. I am honoured by the presence of the Secretary-General and gratified by the high-level attendance of this event.

With 183 States Signatories and 163 ratifying States, the CTBT is one of the most adhered-to instruments in its field. Nearly 90% of the Treaty's verification system is complete, giving it a truly global reach. The Integrated Field Exercise to be held in Jordan later this year is expected to further enhance the organization's operational readiness.

Yet, despite these political and technical achievements, the CTBT has not yet become global law. Is this a cause for concern? Yes. Is it a reason to lose hope? Absolutely not. The Article XIV conferences and this Ministerial conference remind us of the very tangible high-level support behind the Treaty. The Group of Eminent Persons has also been raising the profile of the CTBT in a variety of contexts and ensuring that the CTBT is ever present.

**[Check Against Delivery]**

During my own consultations over the last few months, I have found greater engagement in the establishment and operation of the verification system, and political commitment where others had anticipated unsurmountable obstacles. Additionally, we have seen steady progress in the Treaty's universalization. Brunei-Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Niue and, more recently, the Republic of the Congo, have all ratified since the last Ministerial Meeting. Several other countries, including Angola, are close to completing their ratification processes. I would like to commend them all for their commitment to the vision of a nuclear-test-free world.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The value of the CTBT verification regime has become more and more evident; the human and security benefits of the test-ban continue to be appreciated; a growing number of countries, institutions and people are demonstrating leadership in promoting the Treaty's entry into force. The CTBT is edging closer towards universality.

Amid the challenges that have led to the convening of this meeting for the seventh time, I see unequivocal progress – and reasons for optimism. Together, let us strengthen our resolve and build on recent achievements. The good will and momentum generated over the past two years needs to be met with equally good action. Action on your part; you the member states; the stakeholders and owners of this process. Will we rise to the challenge? The vision of a test-free world certainly deserves all the determination and commitment to the pursuit of our final and noble goal.

Thank you.