

**The statement of the CTBTO Group of Eminent Persons (GEM)
For Article XIV Conference 23 September 2021**

Delivered by

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We are honoured to address this Twelfth Article XIV Conference on behalf of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM).

Since its establishment in 2013, the Group has remained committed to advancing the noble objective of a world free from nuclear testing.

Complementing the work of CTBTO PrepCom Member States, including the Article XIV co-coordinators, the Group has assiduously promoted the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (Treaty) in the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, with a view to achieving its long-awaited entry into force. In this context we call upon the 8 remaining States mentioned in the Annex II of the treaty to join the overwhelming majority of the States and sign and ratify the treaty without further delay and to be the first mover as promptly as possible, instead of waiting for others to do it. It is only through the full implementation of the Treaty that the world will enjoy its promised benefits for international peace, security and development.

The Group appreciates the bold determination and steady vision of the CTBTO secretariate and its Executive Secretary in ensuring that the Treaty remains a focus of international discourse and deliberation. Much progress has been achieved over the years both in reinforcing the Treaty and the non-test norm, and building up and maintaining the Treaty's verification in a sustainable and cost-effective manner.

On multiple occasions the Treaty's verification regime has proven to be capable of fulfilling its mission. Two integrated field exercises have demonstrated that the on-site inspection capabilities of the Organization have advanced to a high degree of sophistication and readiness. The system has proven to be resilient even to the challenging situations like COVID pandemic with the high records of data availability from IMS stations all over the world.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is recognised that there is a large untapped potential of the verification regime to contribute to scientific research and discovery. In particular, there is a growing acknowledgment of what the organization's monitoring technologies and expertise could contribute to the process of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The Treaty's verification regime and monitoring data can also contribute substantively to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

While affirming the core mandate of the Organization and its verification regime is to prohibit nuclear test explosions in a transparent and verifiable manner, spinoff benefits of the monitoring technologies and data should continue to be explored and utilized by the international community.

Since the last Article XIV Conference in September 2019, we have welcomed ratifications by Cuba, and Comoros. With these advancements in universality, the Treaty now has 185 signatures and 170 ratifications.

Today, global peace and security is being advanced by a *de facto* prohibition on nuclear test explosions, backed up by a verification regime that has been proven to be capable of meeting the verification requirements of the Treaty.

While these accomplishments represent the fruits of the labour of the international community, we wish to recognize and pay tribute to the particular efforts of the Executive Secretary and the Provisional Technical Secretariat in advancing the shared aspiration of a nuclear test free world.

The aforementioned advancements notwithstanding, we are troubled at what we view as a significant weakening of the global norms and institutions that have contributed to global peace and security. These include some key mechanisms that we believe have helped to reduce nuclear threats and prevent the use of nuclear weapons.

Excellencies,
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This trend has been accompanied by a breakdown in trust among States, and a re-emergence of narrowly defined concepts of national security that threaten to further diminish the international community's ability to address the significant transboundary challenges of the Twenty-first Century.

There are lots of important issues in the international agenda, considering the immense challenges ahead of humanity for international security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, COVID pandemic situation and its consequences, worldwide public health issues, climate change, economic recession, sustainable development and human welfare. We all know the challenges of sustainable development and its connection to peace. Nuclear explosions would have strong impact on climate change, environment and cause catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Linking to that, it is very important to develop international security mechanisms and make progress in achieving a safer and more secure world by banning all nuclear test explosions through early entry into force of the CTBT.

What is urgently needed is a reordering of priorities and a rethinking of approaches that will allow for the rebuilding of trust and confidence in science-based diplomacy, and multilateralist solutions to threats to global security.

These principles must be embraced if we are to safeguard and build upon the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, which is the only way to advance the overarching objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty embodies the principles of science-based diplomacy and multilateralism in both spirit and letter. Advancing its entry into force remains the most effective and practical non-proliferation and disarmament measure within grasp of the international community. This is particularly true within the context of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We commit ourselves to seizing every opportunity to emphasize the importance of the Treaty and its entry into force and universalization, in line with the GEM Action Plan agreed upon for 2019-2020.

We will continue to work with Member States, civil society, academia, and the media to spread the message that the entry into force of the Treaty is a necessary, and the most achievable, step towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

We will continue to advocate for the CTBT at the highest political levels, leveraging our expertise and experience to highlight the contributions of the Treaty to international peace, security and development.

We will work with the next generation and in particular the CTBTO Youth Group, to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to be empowered to identify innovative solutions that will advance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

And most importantly, we will continue to urge States to support the Treaty and its verification regime by signing and ratifying the Treaty, providing funding for the organization and its activities, participating fully in the establishment of the Treaty's verification regime, and helping to keep the Treaty on the international agenda.

Securing a peaceful and prosperous future depends on a strong and credible nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Ensuring a nuclear test free world is paramount to this objective, and to the broader vision of a world free from nuclear weapons.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is an attainable victory for the international community that is hiding in plain sight. Let us work together to finally put an end to nuclear testing by anyone, anywhere, and for all time.

Thank you.