
Ninth 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, 27 September 2018

Excellencies,
Friends of the CTBT,
Member of GEM and the CTBTO Youth Group,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Friends of the CTBT for convening this Ninth Ministerial Meeting. I am encouraged by the presence of so many Ministers and other high-level dignitaries, underscoring our collective determination to build up and sustain political momentum for the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty.

Earlier this week, we welcomed the ratification of the Treaty by Thailand, and the signature of the Treaty by Tuvalu. The CTBT now has 184 States Signatories and 167 ratifying States.

I wish to thank the Governments of Thailand and Tuvalu for their support and resolve, which has strengthened global efforts to achieve a nuclear-test-free world. With each and every signature and ratification, there is growing chorus of voices demanding an end to nuclear testing that becomes harder and harder to ignore.

The *de facto* norm against nuclear testing underpinned by the CTBT is stronger than ever. It continues to be vital to international peace and security. And even while we may feel that some of our international institutions and regimes are starting to fray at the edges, global support for the Treaty continues to rise.

These successes did not happen by accident. You, the Member States, have provided the support and resources necessary to help us get where we are today. But we cannot sustain this momentum without your unwavering support and commitment.

[Check Against Delivery]

I have always said that in order to achieve our ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear tests, we must ensure that opportunities are identified and acted upon. Regrettably, I believe there have been missed opportunities over the years where the CTBT, along with the monitoring assets, expertise, and infrastructure available at the CTBTO, could have been utilized in important ways to advance international peace and security.

Yesterday and today at high level Security Council meetings, Friends of the CTBT had the opportunity to make a strong case for the CTBT and its entry into force.

The ongoing dialogue and negotiations with the DPRK have yielded modest, but nonetheless important, gains for regional and international security and stability. As I have described in detail on previous occasions, the CTBTO stands ready to contribute to the process of verifiable denuclearization if called upon by its Member States.

Allow me to reiterate what I have emphasized consistently: The path to the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula runs through the CTBT. Any final agreement with the DPRK must include signature and ratification of the Treaty.

Let's not miss this opportunity to demonstrate to the world the value of the CTBT and efficacy of the most sophisticated and far reaching verification regime ever devised.

I urge all States to join us in this historic journey to put an end to nuclear tests through the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT. Together, we will ensure nuclear tests become a relic of the past. And by doing so, we will put in place one of the most practical and achievable elements of a nuclear weapon free world.

Thank you.