

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**Address by Mr Lassina Zerbo
Executive Secretary****Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization****Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty****New York, 29 September 2015**

Mr Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies the co-Presidents, Minister Kishida and Minister Idrissov,

Outgoing presidents, Minister Szijjártó and Minister Marsudi,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can slide out of focus over the years, what does that say for the risk of failing to remember the damage caused by unrestrained nuclear testing?

From 1945 up to the opening for signature of the CTBT in 1996, this world endured well in excess of 2000 nuclear explosions. As with the Hibakusha of Japan, there are witnesses and victims of nuclear testing who can help us understand the human and environmental cost.

I met Karipbek Kuyukov, the Honorary Ambassador of Kazakhstan's ATOM project, on a number of occasions, most recently earlier this month at the General Assembly's event to mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Karipbek says that his aim, his mission, in life is to be among the very last victims of nuclear testing. As he says, he was born without arms, but he can move, and he can talk to everyone about what happened.

This brings me to another anniversary. 2016 will mark twenty years since the CTBT was opened for signature. I don't regard this as a reason for celebration – although we can be proud of the investment by States Signatories of over one billion dollars into global security by establishing a proven verification regime. We can also be relieved that the torrent of nuclear explosions has been reduced to a sporadic trickle.

But let's remember where we are right now. Almost twenty years later, we find ourselves at a Conference provided for under Article XIV of the Treaty to accelerate entry into force. At the ninth such Conference, in fact.

Excellencies,

We need something more. We need States to take responsibility and infuse the Article XIV process with the passion and urgency of witnesses like Karipbek Kuyukov. We need a new form of multilateral cooperation and coordination to complement, add to, and enhance this process. The twentieth anniversary of the Treaty will be the time to tear away the abstract and make the nuclear test ban real. Recent events have shown that, with determination and collaboration, States can take giant leaps in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

On taking office in 2013 I established the Group of Eminent Persons, or GEM, to inject new energy into efforts to finally secure the Treaty. I am pleased that some distinguished GEM members can be here today in various capacities. High Representative Mogherini's strong words of support illustrate perfectly how the GEM can combine its forces with others. I also look forward to Ambassador Abe's overview of the Group's activities, which will form part of the statement by Japan.

Finally, in the spirit of new approaches, I wish to share my remaining time slot with Lord Des Browne, GEM member, Vice-Chair of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and former Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom.

Thank you.