**National Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney T.D., to the Twelfth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 23rd September 2021**

Co-Chairs, Executive Secretary, Distinguished Delegates,

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a milestone Ireland will also mark at the Security Council next week. Ireland is a strong supporter of the Treaty. The CTBT is a vital part of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and an important step towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

After twenty-five years, it is past time for the CTBT to enter into force. Ireland continues to call individually on all eight remaining Annex 2 States to demonstrate leadership and join the CTBT without delay. While it can never be a substitute for entry into force, Ireland calls for strict observance of the global moratorium on nuclear weapons testing.

We sadly know all too well the enduring damage that nuclear testing has caused over generations to human health and the environment. In the midst of the unprecedented global public health crisis, it would be unconscionable to consider ever undertaking such testing again.

Ireland strongly condemns the testing of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the only breach this century of the international norm against testing. These tests, in flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions, are a threat to international peace and security. We call for DPRK’s immediate signature and ratification of the CTBT, as well as a return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Though there is still much progress to be made, the last twenty-five years have also brought a number of positive developments. The establishment of the comprehensive global verification regime has delivered important practical benefits, not only in detecting nuclear tests, but also in civilian applications.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organisation for the extensive work to prepare for the full implementation of the Treaty.

I assure you that Ireland will continue to advocate strongly for the entry into force and universalisation of the CTBT.

ENDS

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