



Mr. Chairman,
Executive Secretary, Dr. Zerbo,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team, Mr. Chairman, for organising this Ministerial Meeting here today. Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. H.R. Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Nuclear explosive tests are now an abnormality, carried out only in breach of a de facto international norm; a norm which has emerged thanks to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. There is therefore absolutely no question about the Treaty's effectiveness. Neither is there any question about the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation; an organisation with a truly global monitoring presence that is able to do something that no single country could – collecting and analysing data from stations all around the world. Despite both the Treaty and the CTBTO being a proven success, the former has not yet entered into force while the latter remains still provisional.

This is most regrettable. Particularly since the relevance of the CTBT and the value of its monitoring system were brought into sharper focus this very year in the wake of the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in clear violation of its international obligations.

For twenty years, Malta has had no doubts about the importance of the CTBT. Malta was among the first countries to sign the Treaty on the very day it was opened for signature twenty years ago, and ratified it less than five years later. Since our accession to the European Union in 2004, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with our EU partners in offering our strong support for the entry into force and universalisation of the CTBT and the credibility of its verification regime and in ensuring that the Union has become a preeminent partner for the Provisional Technical Secretariat as well as a leading advocate for the Treaty itself.

On this occasion, during a year which marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty, and which has unfortunately been marked by the violation of the ban on testing as previously mentioned, allow me to reiterate Malta's unwavering support for the CTBT.

Malta reaffirms that the early entry into force of the Treaty constitutes a key priority and calls upon all States, particularly the Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay and without conditions. Pending its entry into force, all States should maintain all existing voluntary moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion and refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT.

These moratoria, however helpful though, are no substitute for the Treaty's entry into force and the time for that is clearly now.

Thank you.