**Statement by**

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**The 12th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

**September 23, 2021**

Co-Presidents and Excellences,

It is a great privilege for me to address this year’s Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the CTBT’s opening for signature. I extend sincere congratulations to the Co-Presidents and, of course, our new Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, Dr. Robert Floyd. We have every confidence that his extensive experience and able leadership will guide us well in making meaningful progress toward “a world without nuclear weapons.”

Excellences,

The CTBT norms have served as one of the most effective measures to strengthen the international nonproliferation and disarmament regime. The total prohibition of nuclear weapons tests helped curb not only the horizontal spread of atomic weapons but also their vertical proliferation. However, the sheer fact that the CTBT remains in fragile legal limbo is a stark reminder of the work before us. Our commitment must be translated into a legally binding obligation of the international community, and we need to do so without further ado.

Despite the persistent challenges, the State Signatories and the CTBTO have shown remarkable ingenuity in keeping the objective and purpose of the Treaty. Furthermore, 92 percent of what will be the International Monitoring System (IMS) has already been installed and running, showing once again our determination to uphold the CTBT norms. In the meantime, as the IMS has been operating provisionally for the past quarter-century, we have witnessed emerging challenges to the sustainability of the monitoring and verification systems. It is evident that it is only through the Treaty’s entry into force, effective engagement, and support of the State Signatories that we can adequately respond to them.

Finally, the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains one of the most prominent challenges in our efforts to uphold the global nonproliferation regime. This issue is as old as the CTBT itself. My government is committed to turning the Korean Peninsula into a land of peace, free from nuclear weapons and threats. However, the rift created by decades of distrust, lack of communication, and scarce cooperation experience can hardly be healed overnight. It naturally requires strong political will, dedication, patience, and the unwavering support of the international community. In the course, we count on the steadfast support of the State Signatories and the CTBTO.

Co-Presidents and Excellences,

We gathered again to renew our commitment to the CTBT and its objectives. The Republic of Korea will continue to work together with all State Signatories for the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty and to ensure the effectiveness of the verification regime. Thank you. /END/