Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This occasion allows us to contemplate more deeply on what we have achieved over this period. And it also gives us an opportunity to look forward to the future together. 

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is an indispensable building block within the complex and intertwined nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Together with the Non-Proliferation Treaty it represents one of its central pillars. It thus contributes substantially to strengthening the global peace, security and stability.

Common understanding of CTBT’s real value is best demonstrated by achieving its near universal adherence. So far it has been signed by 183 states and ratified by 164 of them. The nuclear test moratorium has become a de facto international norm. It has had positive effects on the international security environment.

In 20 years the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and Signatory States have together managed to create a system capable of monitoring and detecting nuclear explosions anywhere on Earth. Taking into account its global scale, it really is an enormous achievement.
The international monitoring system is nearly complete. It is robust and effective. It has already contributed to critical scientific data on many key issues. They range from tsunami warnings to tracking radioactivity and nuclear reactor accidents.

We can be pleased with all of this. At the same time, we cannot turn a blind eye to some other facts on the ground.

Sure, the 20th anniversary of the CTBT is an opportunity to highlight its achievements. Yet it is also an occasion to focus on what still needs to be done. Despite all the efforts, the Treaty has not yet entered into force. We need to finish, what has been started in Geneva 20 years ago.

With every new ratification and signature of the CTBT we are one step closer to this goal and to the universalization of the Treaty. We also recognize that the CTBT Annex II countries bear a special responsibility for the Treaty to enter into force. Slovakia thus continuously calls on all States that have not signed or ratified the CTBT to do so without delay. That pertains especially to the remaining Annex II countries.

Without the legally-binding Treaty, nuclear test moratorium also remains a fragile accomplishment. The latest North Korea's nuclear test shows the urgency to put the CTBTO and its full verification regime in place. On the other hand, this case has proved that the monitoring system works and is reliable. It detected unusual seismic waveforms practically immediately.

Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This gathering is also a moment to think how each state can best contribute to CTBT goals. We are aware that when the Treaty enters into force, the CTBTO engagement will be very extensive. And the verification regime must be then fully operational.

So in our view it is crucial to support activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat in technical terms. It should help it fulfil its mandate, including the training of inspectors and testing of monitoring devices.

Slovakia is committed to actively contribute to building up the verification regime. We see our particular role through hosting various exercises on our territory. Busy cooperation between Slovakia and the Provisional Technical Secretariat started already in 2001.

This year, Slovakia will host an On-Site Inspection Course for some 80 trainees from around the world. The participants will acquire basic skills needed for conducting On-Site Inspections. We are ready to provide our available capacities and expertise also in the future.

Additionally, I am pleased to announce that the Agreement between Slovakia and the Preparatory Commission related to On-Site Inspections has been ratified last week.
Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, in conclusion, to reiterate that Slovakia will continue its support for the CTBT. We stand ready to deepen our existing cooperation with the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

Thank you for your attention!