



Statement by

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the Slovak Republic

Head of Delegation

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

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- Check against delivery -

Dear Mr. President,

May I start by congratulating both, His Excellency Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and His Excellency Mr. Erlan Isdirrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, on their election as Co-Presidents of this Conference. I wish them every success and pledge support for carrying out their duties in *furthering the facilitation of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)*. I also commend the UN Secretary-General, as depositary of the Treaty, for convening this Conference and thank the outgoing Co-Presidents for their tireless work and dedication.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union that will be presented later. At the same time, I would like to make a few national comments on this important occasion.

Dear Mr. President,

First I would like to *welcome Congo, Niue and Angola* who joined the Treaty since the last Conference in 2013.

The increasing number of ratifications is certainly a great achievement as the Treaty becomes almost universal. Nevertheless, after almost two decades since it was opened for signature and 70 years after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, we still struggle with putting nuclear-testing cap fully on track.

We value every single ratification of this Treaty as it confirms a desire of the international community to imbed another building block on a way towards our shared goal - a world without nuclear weapons.

There is no preferred ratification. There is no need to wait for a first move in order to progress with the universalization of the Treaty. However, we must also recognize that the CTBT Annex II countries bear special responsibility for the entry into force of the Treaty. Slovakia therefore continues calling on all States that have not ratified the CTBT, especially the remaining Annex II countries to do so without delay.

We regret that the 2015 NPT Review Conference could not find a consensus on its final document. It has deepened frustration among the States and underscored a lack of confidence within the non-proliferation regime. We need to restore the trust and credibility of the regime and the NPT as its cornerstone. The early entry into force of the CTBT would certainly generate much needed impetus toward strengthening the regime.

Slovakia is a staunch supporter of the CTBT. It is a crucial instrument of the non-proliferation regime essential for maintaining and strengthening global security.

That is why we must sustain our united support for the Treaty. We believe we all need to reaffirm our commitment beyond the declaration, in particular through making the CTBT a law.

Dear Mr. President,

Slovakia recognizes the *central role of the CTBT verification regime* as well as that of its various components for securing the treaty's objectives.

Thus we fully support activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the CTBTO under the skilled leadership of its Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo in fulfilling its mandate, including the training of inspectors and testing of monitoring devices.

I wish to reaffirm continued commitment of my Government to contribute actively to the building of the verification regime, particularly through hosting various CTBTO exercises in our territory. Slovakia will continue to offer its available capacities for training activities.

I am pleased to confirm that the Agreement between Slovakia and the PTS on mutual cooperation has been finalized and will be ready for signing soon.

I hope the closer cooperation will help the PTS to ensure the verification system of the CTBT be fully in place at the time of the entry into force of the CTBT.

Thank you!