

Statement
by H.E. Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the 13th Conference on Article XIV of the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
(22 September 2023, New York)

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Dear Dr. Floyd,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Executive Secretary, Dr. Robert Floyd, and his PTS team on their tireless efforts and meticulous work to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as strengthening its verification regime.

Let me also thank Norway and Panama for their leadership in facilitating and assuming the Co-Presidency of the CTBT Article XIV Process, and assure them of Kazakhstan's full support. I would like to extend our appreciation to the outgoing co-Presidents South Africa and Italy for their hard work and important efforts.

Co-Chairs,

We consider the CTBT as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and its entry into force as a major contribution to international peace and security. The total ban on any nuclear weapon test explosion established by the CTBT will contribute to a world without nuclear weapons by constraining their development and qualitative improvement.

The CTBT prevents the serious health and environmental impacts of nuclear tests on people and the Planet and so its entry into force is a moral obligation. CTBT is not just merely a legal but also a powerful humanitarian instrument.

The closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, on 29 August 1991, holds great symbolic significance for both Kazakhstan and the international community. This important event sent a powerful political message and played a critical role in the broader global efforts to adopt the CTBT in 1996. Since then, Kazakhstan has consistently supported the Treaty and the build-up of its verification regime.

At the initiative of Kazakhstan, the United Nations General Assembly instituted the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on 29 August. We commemorate this day by adopting a Joint Statement with the CTBTO, as well as organizing a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The CTBT has an intrinsic, complementary relationship with the landmark Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which also recognizes the crucial importance of ending nuclear test explosions.

Kazakhstan, like many other developing countries, is faithful to its obligations under the NPT. We did not only renounce our nuclear weapons, but signed and ratified the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in Central Asia, also known as the Semipalatinsk Treaty. The five signatories are collaboratively

working on effectively implementing the NPT and its protocol safeguards to make this sub-region a zone of peace.

Over the past year, significant progress has been made towards the universalisation of the CTBT. Today, the Treaty has received 187 signatures and 178 ratifications.

We welcome the recent ratifications by Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, the Solomon Islands, and Sri Lanka of the CTBT. This momentum synergizes the collaborative efforts of all its stakeholders. Looking ahead, today's Article XIV Conference offers additional opportunities to go further these remarkable achievements.

There is more work to be done. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay, in particular, the remaining eight States listed in Annex II of the Treaty. We dedicate ourselves individually and jointly to continue raise awareness among the general public and advocate at the highest political levels. We must ensure that we realize the resolute determination of the international community to bring the CTBT into force.

We call upon all States to maintain existing moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions. They must also refrain from any action that would undermine the Treaty's object and purpose. However, these moratoria do not have the same permanent and legally-binding effect to end nuclear weapons testing and all other nuclear explosions, which can only be achieved by the entry into force of the Treaty.

Co-Chairs,

Greater acceptance of the Treaty builds up the verification regime to ensure no nuclear explosion can go undetected. The On-site inspections can only be executed if the Treaty is in force. The IMS, with 337 bases, with extremely sensitive instruments, is impressive and vital for global security, as well as early warning for natural disasters and phenomena.

Kazakhstan's significant contribution to strengthen the CTBT verification regime is reflected in the five stations that are part of the CTBT's International Monitoring System. The Director General of the National Nuclear Dr. Erlan Batyrbekov is the Chair of the CTBTO Working Group B and we hope States Parties will support his candidacy for the consecutive second term.

Kazakhstan fully shares CTBTO's commitment to conduct the Integrated Field Exercises in Sri Lanka in 2025. It is in fact noteworthy that the first CTBTO Integrated Field Exercise was hosted by Kazakhstan in 2008. The exercise provided yet further proof of the verifiability of the CTBT. It has shown that the final element of the CTBT verification regime, with on-site inspections, will be a strong and reliable deterrent to potential violators of the ban on nuclear explosions once the Treaty enters into force.

As a consistent supporter of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Kazakhstan will chair the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in 2024.

Thereafter, it will Chair the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2025.

Co-Chairs,

The consecutive failures of the NPT Review Conferences and its First Preparatory Committee session in Vienna, to reach consensus further demonstrate existing divergence of views and lack of dialogue and cooperation among States Parties. This negative trend shall not pose any discouraging effect on the remaining Annex II States on their decision to ratify the Treaty, but send a clear signal for effective and fair implementation, as well as, a spirit of cooperation.

What is noteworthy is the significant worldwide support for the CTBT is reflected in the fact that the Article XIV conferences have always succeeded in adopting final documents, unlike other disarmament fora in the past.

I sincerely hope that this momentum will accelerate the CTBT's ratification process to allow the Treaty to operate on its full verification capacity.

To conclude, I wish all delegates a very successful conference and fruitful discussions.

Thank you.