



CTBTO
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN
TREATY ORGANIZATION

**High-Level Meeting of the
General Assembly to Commemorate and
Promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests**

Dr Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary

4 September 2024

Mr President
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates

Thank you, Mr President, for inviting me to address the General Assembly on the critical issue of banning nuclear tests.

My thanks also to Mr Adedeji Ebo, for delivering opening remarks on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu.

Congratulations to France for the splendid Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris!

What if there was a medal category – Achievements in International Diplomacy?

A medal for the longest period without nuclear test explosions, since the fateful first test in 1945 in New Mexico. May 1998 to October 2006 wins the gold medal: 3054 days - over eight years!

But today we're in a strong silver medal position. It's 2558 days since the last explosion in North Korea, September 2017. We'll actually set a fine new record if we get to mid-January 2026 without another test. There's a goal to aspire to.

Before 1996, there were more than two thousand nuclear tests, many far bigger than the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Between 1964 and 1984 on average one massive nuclear explosion every week, every week colleagues. Traces from these tests are still found across the world - in plants and animals, in sharks' eye-tissue in the Arctic seas, even in the corals of the Great Barrier Reef.

In 1996 the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature. From 24 September 1996 through to today, 4 September 2024, less than one dozen test events. In our current century, only one state has tested a nuclear weapon: North Korea.

By 1996 the diplomats had been provided with the science to make a test ban verifiable. That required creating an International Monitoring System – over 300 monitoring facilities around the world. We've almost completed that network, more than 90 percent.

Seismic and hydroacoustic data, infrasound and radionuclide data, streaming non-stop into Vienna from those 300 facilities around the whole planet.

States know that we'll detect any test really fast, and we'll know where it's happened with precision well exceeding the original targets of the Treaty.

Here's something that maybe isn't immediately obvious. The data streaming into the CTBT's International Data Centre doesn't belong to the CTBTO. Rather, it's shared by all of our 187 signatory states. Any of them can download that data for their own purposes: natural disaster preparedness, monitoring tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions; for studying marine life, studying climate change; or helping civil aviation disaster response.

Receiving and analysing that data isn't easy, and so States need serious scientific capability to do it. Our National Data Centres for All initiative helps States access the data and build their own national capability. All States, bigger or smaller, can enjoy the full benefits of Treaty membership.

CTBTO's verification system is credible, its respected. It works. It's fair. This success is all the more impressive as the Treaty hasn't yet entered into force.

Why? Because under the Treaty's Annex 2, 44 named States have to ratify the Treaty and nine haven't yet done so.

Momentum towards universality is increasing. States are still signing and ratifying, nine ratifying in the past 30 months. The CTBT now has 187 signatories, 178 ratifications – a mighty international convergence of view.

Still, without entry into force we don't have the Treaty's full set of verification tools. No consultation and clarification procedures. No confidence-building mechanisms. And above all delegates, no On-Site Inspections, or OSI - the unambiguous, certain way to determine whether an explosion has or has not been a nuclear test explosion.

Mr President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me be clear. These are worrying times, even dangerous times in many parts of our world. What if things get worse?

Imagine this scenario: imagine that our monitoring system detects what looks like a nuclear test. Something has been detected with all the characteristics of a nuclear explosion.

Imagine that the State where the explosion occurred denies that it was a nuclear test. Accusations would fly. Risks and tensions would grow fast. The world needs to know exactly what happened.

The CTBTO's on-site inspection would give that answer! Conclusive evidence, shared equally with all, transparent, fair, and open. No doubt. No risk of misinterpretation.

We need this mechanism now, more than ever. Yet, sadly, without entry into force, we cannot conduct such an inspection.

We're doing what's needed to get ready. On the day the Treaty enters into force, we're aiming to be ready to conduct on-site inspection when required.

We've just run a major on-site inspection exercise in Hungary, testing our people, our procedures and our equipment. This is part of the build-up to a full OSI exercise to be conducted in Sri Lanka next year.

We're working hard, but we need only the mandate that entry into force of this remarkable Treaty will give us.

So today I urge all States: be open! Be open to the bold, principled decisions, the bold leadership needed to see the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force, legally binding and with all the necessary verification tools to give confidence to all States, and for the peace and security of all of humanity.

Now that would really deserve the gold medal for Achievements in International Diplomacy!

I thank you.