



**CTBTO**  
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE  
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN  
TREATY ORGANIZATION

**Statement from Dr. Robert Floyd**  
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**Conference on Disarmament**  
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Mr. President, Excellencies, Colleagues and friends,

I'm very pleased to once again address the Conference on Disarmament.

This year, we mark three decades since the Conference on Disarmament, your predecessors, finished negotiating the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Three decades since the CTBT was opened for signature. A landmark moment. A moment when the world chose restraint.

A moment recognizing that nuclear test explosions were making every last one of us *less* secure, we had entered a race, where everyone would come in last. Nations agreed: enough was enough. But today, trust is low. Risks are growing. We need to reflect on how far we have come, but also to look at what we need, for a safer and more peaceful tomorrow. It is time to once again choose restraint.

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In 1945, the destructive power locked within the atom was released for the first time. In the eighty years since then, thousands of nuclear test explosions have rocked our planet. But the story of nuclear testing is not a story of eighty years. It is the story of fifty years, followed by thirty years. Let me explain.

In the fifty years after that first test, more than 2,000 nuclear explosions took place. That's one every nine days. Fueling escalation. Stoking tension. Until the CTBT.

In the thirty years since the CTBT was opened for signature, the picture looks very different. Less than a dozen nuclear weapon test explosions have been conducted and announced. The last one of those? More than eight years ago. From *two thousand* ... to less than twelve. That is

restraint. That is remarkable. But let me assure you, I will address the elephant in the room shortly.

The CTBT has not entered into force, but it has ushered in a transformation: Today, nuclear tests are no longer normal. Today, there is a strong global norm against nuclear testing. That transformation alone is a triumph. A triumph we must not overlook. And its progress we must not surrender. And how has that progress been possible? How has that global norm been established? In a word: verification.

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The CTBT established a peerless International Monitoring System. A technical marvel. More than 300 monitoring facilities scanning land, sea, and the air around the clock. Spanning the entire planet. Searching for hints of nuclear tests. So, what does that provide us?

Firstly, assurance, assurance that we are not seeing a return to the era of nuclear weapons testing that we saw in the past. And secondly, a foundation that strengthens the norm against nuclear testing.

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This global network can detect a nuclear explosive test that produces an explosive yield of as little as 500 tonnes of TNT equivalent. A mere two to three percent of the yield of the blasts that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its capabilities are astonishing. But they are not without limits. And now... for the elephant in the room.

At this very session of the Conference on Disarmament, you have heard concerns expressed regarding possible nuclear tests of very low yields. And let me be clear: any nuclear test explosion that takes place is a matter of grave concern. Any nuclear test explosion. But, these new discussions are not a verdict on how far we have come. They powerfully help us focus on what remains to be done.

The International Monitoring System registers extremely small events. You would be amazed how small. But can we confidently and categorically determine the origin of everything the system sees? To that the answer is no. At least not with today's technology. And for that reason, the International Monitoring System was never meant to stand alone.

The IMS is doing its job. It is a remarkable tool that makes an enormous difference.

Transparency – supporting a powerful global norm. But it is only one critical part of a four-part verification system. The Treaty provides for three other crucial mechanisms. Confidence-building measures. Consultations and clarifications. And on-site inspections. These are tools designed to help address disputed claims and uncertainties below the detection limits of the International Monitoring System.

Below a yield of 500 tonnes of TNT equivalent and all the way down to zero plus. This need was foreseen by those who sat here in the CD some 30 years ago. Those brilliant minds who painstakingly negotiated this Treaty. But to bring these verification mechanisms formally into effect. We need the CTBT to enter into force. In the meantime, dialogue must continue. Voluntary steps could be taken.

The IMS could be further enhanced – the technology exists, albeit at a cost. There are interim solutions, should the world and its leaders choose to use them. This is a time for difficult conversations and bold solutions. Thanks to the CTBT, you have a foundation for those conversations.

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Colleagues, friends,

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CTBT is a milestone to inspire us. It is a reminder of the power of restraint. And here I want to emphasize restraint is not inaction. It is a choice, one that requires courage. Courage to hold onto the hard-fought gains of the CTBT. Courage to see opportunity in challenging moments. Courage to pursue a better future that is within our reach. The CTBT at 30: one treaty, one goal, zero tests.

Thank you.