Angela Kane

Speech at CTBT Ministerial Meeting on behalf of the GEM

Thank you very much. It is my great pleasure and honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM).

Since its creation almost three years ago in New York, the GEM has pursued innovative approaches to advancing the entry into force of the CTBT.

On behalf of the entire Group, I would like to thank Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo for his original thinking, demonstrated not only by the creation of the GEM itself, but also by the establishment of the CTBTO Youth Group in February this year at the closing of the CTBT Symposium.

In line with its declarations issued last year in Seoul and Hiroshima, the GEM once again renews its resolve to achieve the paramount goal of the Treaty's entry into force.

Today, we are pleased to be able to address directly such a large number of the CTBT States and Signatories. The GEM considers it important to continue its work and to expand its audience, particularly in light of the worrisome international climate.

This January, the DPRK conducted a fourth nuclear test. It is the only State to have conducted nuclear tests in this century. The news of this event reverberated around the world. The United Nations Security Council condemned this action with two resolutions, sharpening sanctions on the DPRK. But was this response of the international community enough?

We are gathered here today to reinforce the demand that no more nuclear tests take place. Nowhere and never again. We reiterate the importance of preserving the moratorium on nuclear testing. We strongly believe that there is an urgency to uniting the international community on this issue.

The GEM is committed to ensuring that governments respond to the growing global demand for a world free from nuclear weapons and their testing. In this regard, the remaining outlier States that still need to ratify the CTBT for its entry into force must feel accountable not only to their own citizens, but to people from other countries and regions.

To our great regret, we are not here to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the CTBT, but to lament that it still has not entered into force.

Nonetheless, the CTBT has become the de facto global norm. Many countries benefit from the outstanding work of the Treaty's verification regime. The International Monitoring System and the International Data Center have reached a high level of operational readiness; the simulations of on-site inspections in Kazakhstan and Jordan have been extremely successful.

For this reason, paradoxically, the Treaty has become a victim of its own success. States have become complacent, and may not feel a sense of urgency to achieve entry into force.

We view as positive that over 100 the 2015 NPT Review Conference spoke to the importance of the CTBT's role in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. This should help generate and augment the political will to enable the CTBTO to become fully operational.

But as Executive Secretary Zerbo said during the NPT Review Conference, mere words of support, without real action, will not suffice.

Working toward the Treaty's entry into force is a global responsibility: putting in place an essential measure to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The GEM urges political leaders to commit to the Treaty's universalization. The Group further calls on civil society to help raise global awareness of the implications of simply preserving the status quo. The negative consequences deriving from continued lack of progress cannot be underestimated.

The GEM reaffirms its resolve to press for action to accelerate the Treaty's entry into force. The Group will strive to ensure that the Treaty remains high on the political agenda of governments around the world and welcomes the resolve of the Youth Group to work toward the same goal.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is long overdue. Let us finish now what we started 20 years ago, without waiting another 20 years.

Thank you.