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Message from CTBTO Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo for the

**INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS**

*Wednesday, 29 August 2018*

Today reminds us of one of the longest-sought objectives of the international community; putting an end to nuclear tests. As we observe the **International Day against Nuclear Tests** we must join forces and take the final steps to secure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

As long as the Treaty is not in force, the established international norm against nuclear testing and the global verification system that has been developed over the past two decades are at risk. I urge the last eight countries to ratify the Treaty and I appeal to others to renew their efforts in supporting it.

I returned last week from a visit to the Republic of Korea, where I discussed the situation of Korean Peninsula with many senior officials and members of the civil society. The discussions that I had strengthened my conviction that the CTBT and its organization can play an important role in finding a lasting solution to the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula. The Treaty and its verification regime, as well as the expertise and capabilities of the Commission, are all the more relevant to contribute to the process of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The significance of being in Kazakhstan on 29 August where nuclear testing has left a poisonous legacy is immense. Today also commemorates the shutdown in 1991 of the Semipalatinsk test site, where the Soviet Union ran one of the most extensive nuclear test programmes in history.

Our meeting in Astana for the first time brings together the CTBTO's Group of Eminent Persons and the CTBTO Youth Group - joining forces to advance ratification of the CTBT for a more stable world. It will also explore key issues of denuclearisation and the future of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.