

**Address by the Executive Secretary
Of the Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Mr. Tibor Tóth

**Meeting Dedicated to the 20th Anniversary of the Closing of the
Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site
Kazakhstan, 13 October 2011**

Your Excellency the Mayor of the East Kazakhstan province
Director General Amano
Mayor Taue
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to address you as the representative of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the organization that bans all nuclear weapon testing. We have just arrived from the Semipalatinsk test site, where 456 nuclear tests were conducted. Nuclear tests that poisoned the atmosphere, poisoned the people of this region and also poisoned the world's political environment.

What I've learned today is that the people here in Semey — and the people of Kazakhstan — care about nuclear disarmament; they care about the future, of a world without nuclear weapons. I will take this message home to my organization and its 182 Member States.

We all have a very sad legacy of 2,000 nuclear weapon tests. But at the same time there is a future in which you and others believe. Your country and your leader, President Nazarbayev, did the right thing 20 years ago. Did the right thing by closing down the test site, by giving up the nuclear arsenal and the missiles to deliver those weapons. Did the right thing by closing facilities which could produce fissile material for weapons, and by turning fissile material for weapon purposes into fissile material for peaceful purposes.

And finally, you did the right thing by joining treaties: joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, joining the Treaty I am representing here, joining the nuclear weapon-free zone for this region.

What you accomplished 20 years ago is not simply about the past, but sends a powerful beacon for the future. We will have to spread the message you are sending— not just with your words but with your deeds— all over the world. Why? Because only then will we be able to continue to enjoy peace and security as we are enjoying the sunshine this afternoon in Semey.

I solemnly pledge to you that the treaty outlawing nuclear weapon tests and my organization will continue to care about the future. We will translate ground zero – the test site – into zero tests.

We have to join forces. We have to convince those nine countries which have yet to accept that there will be no tests in the future and that there is no future with tests. So we will have to work together to bring our Treaty, and I really mean our Treaty, into force.

I am humbled to be here, I am so happy that you are cheering the cause you are representing and we are representing. Good luck to all of us.

Thank you.