**Statement by H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into**

**Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

**New-York, September 23, 2021**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I would like to express our congratulation to His Excellency Mr. Robert Floyd, on his recent election to the position of Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and support the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) aimed at early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and in ensuring the effectiveness of the CTBTO activities.

I would also extend my gratitude to the Presidents of the Conference for their dedicated work in facilitating the preparations for this important Conference.

As a country strongly supporting the efforts aimed at achieving the goal of nuclear-weapons-free world, Azerbaijan remains committed to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are of the view that CTBT represents the significant breakthrough in the longstanding international efforts to curb the qualitative improvement of nuclear stockpiles and the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

Despite the aspiration to achieve early entry into force of the Treaty, which has been so clearly expressed by the international community on numerous occasions, more efforts should be dedicated to ensure the universality of CTBT and worldwide nuclear security. We once again call on all remaining Annex II States that have yet to ratify the Treaty spare no effort to do so.

We appreciate the efforts undertaken so far by the Preparatory Commission and the PTS on the implementation of Treaty clauses, in particular on the establishment of International Monitoring System, On-site Inspection elements and International Data Center in Vienna.

In addition to its primary function, the Treaty verification system brings scientific and civil benefits, including disaster alert systems, through civil and scientific applications of waveform and radionuclide technologies and use of the data. We are encouraged that the CTBT verification regime has demonstrated its utility in providing accurate real-time data relating to major natural disasters-earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear accidents, as well as other civil scientific applications to all States Signatories. Since the data accumulated in International Data Center could be used for the civil and scientific purposes, it is important to seek ways to ensure that those capabilities will be broadly benefited by the international community.

Robust monitoring and verification system may also bring other benefits including deterring some malign actors from launching dual-use ballistic missiles against residential areas and civilian infrastructure as Armenia did against Azerbaijan in October-November 2020, which caused numerous human and material losses.

Training activities, workshops, and rendering assistance provided by Provisional Technical Secretariat to signatory states are instrumental for advancing their capabilities to ensure the effective implementation of the Treaty clauses.

In the light of afore-mentioned, we express our gratitude for the technical assistance provided within the framework of Capacity Building Program launched by the PTS that ensured the provision of relevant basic equipment and technologies for National Data Center established in Geology Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. While this assistance significantly contributed to the capabilities of the National Date Center in Azerbaijan, we need to do more to revitalize the activities and operation and receive more capacity building assistance for the National Data Center.

Azerbaijan is interested in further strengthening of national capacities, especially through receiving state-of-the art technologies and expanding of training opportunities for specialists on verification technologies, and other areas of activities of the CTBTO.

We are looking forward to expand our productive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat in the coming years.

Thank you.