**STATEMENT**

**by the Minster of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria to the**

**12th Article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the**

**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

**New York, 23 September 2021**

Distinguished Co-Presidents,

Let me begin by congratulating Italy and South Africa on assuming the Presidency of the Twelfth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT and express our appreciation for the work carried out by Germany and Algeria as previous Article XIV Coordinators. I would like also to congratulate Dr Robert Floyd, on his appointment as the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO and wish him every success in his future endeavors.

I assure you of Bulgaria’s full support for achieving a successful outcome to this meeting.

Bulgaria fully associates with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Facing its 25th anniversary, the CTBT proved to be one of the most important pillars of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It has come a long way and achieved important successes: not only has it resulted in the establishment of an effective and highly respected International Monitoring System (IMS), but it has also acquired near universal support, creating a norm of a nuclear testing taboo adhered to by almost all States. In that regard, we commend the work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat, the Organization’s expertise and all its activities as an important contribution to global peace and security.

Yet, 25 years after the CTBT was opened for signature, efforts are still needed in order to bring the Treaty into force.

As a country from Annex II that has signed and ratified the Treaty, Bulgaria continuously calls upon all States, and in particular Annex II States, who have not done so yet, to sign and ratify the CTBT at their earliest opportunity. Bulgaria strongly believes that once in force, the CTBT will provide a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosions of any kind. This will be a crucial advancement of the noble goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Although some countries are applying a *de facto* moratorium on nuclear test explosions, we call upon all states to refrain from actions that would undermine the Treaty’s crucial role in prohibiting any nuclear test explosions pending its entry into force.

We urge DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT without any delay and abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The DPRK has to take concrete actions on the complete, irreversible, and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to comply with its obligations under all relevant UNSC resolutions.

Bulgaria remains strongly committed to pursuing the objectives of the CTBT. In that regard, we are encouraged by the effective work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, the Provisional Technical Secretariat, and the International Data Center on keeping the CTBT verification regime functioning even in the time of a global pandemic.

Thank you.