



CTBTO
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN
TREATY ORGANIZATION

**Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Executive Secretary Dr Robert Floyd

**Address to the Conference on Disarmament
High-level Segment**

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Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you, Madam President, for your warm welcome. I also wish to express my gratitude to the outgoing Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, HE Ambassador Li Song for extending an invitation to address this High-Level Segment.

Now, is an important moment in history, as we hear of nuclear weapons being put on high alert, in the escalating and gravely concerning situation in Ukraine. It causes me to reflect on the poignant statement of The Elders, a group of world leaders of great renown:

“As long as nuclear weapons remain in existence, it is inevitable that they will someday be used, whether by design, accident or miscalculation.”

Today, this message is especially resonant, and it is one we should all heed.

We all share the goal of moving toward a world free of nuclear weapons. But until we succeed in this endeavour, the risk of nuclear weapons use will remain. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is already helping to reduce these risks. And the Treaty will play an essential role as a core legal and technical component of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

This Conference has been instrumental in setting out rules and obligations that advance peace and security. Weapons of mass destruction pose existential threats. Effective arms

control and disarmament measures are the best tools we have to address them. There is great potential, and responsibility, within this Conference to advance our collective security objectives. I wish the Conference the greatest success as it carries out its vital tasks.

Madam President

I am deeply honoured to have the opportunity to speak here today in the Palais des Nations. Just over twenty-five years ago, diplomats and scientists were labouring intensively to put together the final pieces of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I can only imagine the sense of excitement, mixed with some fatigue, in these hallowed halls at the time. It must have been palpable.

It is simply stunning to trace the history of the CTBT and the incredible effort it took to make the Treaty a reality. More than four decades passed between the first call for a stand-still agreement on nuclear testing in 1954 to the adoption of the CTBT in 1996. We will never have a true accounting of the long hours of negotiations and extensive scientific research and technological development that provided the groundwork for the Treaty.

But we should understand well that in the end, it was the Conference on Disarmament (CD) that provided the venue for completing the negotiation of the CTBT.

This was a momentous achievement for humanity, and a victory for science and diplomacy in support of peace and security. It was the culmination of decades of determined efforts to put in place a comprehensive, universal, verifiable, and non-discriminatory prohibition on nuclear testing.

I am extremely grateful for the efforts of those involved over 25 years ago.

Today, I am particularly encouraged by the Conference's decision to establish five subsidiary bodies to advance its substantive work. This is a welcome and encouraging development. It testifies to the spirit of overcoming challenges to coming together on shared objectives. I wish the Conference the greatest success as it carries out its vital tasks.

Madam President,

We are celebrating the success of the CTBT in this, the 25th anniversary year of the Treaty. And I continue to be inspired by how well it is delivering on its stated object and purpose – a verifiable end to nuclear testing. One need only look to the historical record for proof.

Since its adoption, the CTBT has created a firm and virtually unchallenged norm against nuclear testing.

What I find particularly compelling is the stark contrast between the world before and after the adoption of the CTBT. Less than one dozen tests have been conducted since the adoption of the Treaty. Now compare that with the more than 2,000 nuclear tests that were carried out before. During this time, the average explosive yield of nuclear tests each year was equivalent to nearly 1,000 Hiroshima sized bombs.

This is a staggering demonstration of the importance and impact of the CTBT, and its significant role as an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

But let us not forget that the strength of the CTBT is that its prohibition on nuclear testing is backed up by a global verification regime. The lynchpin of this regime – the International Monitoring System (IMS) – is nearly complete. A remarkable feat of ingenuity, engineering, and international cooperation, the IMS has proven its ability to meet the verification requirements of the Treaty time and time again.

As I stand with you today, I cannot help but be in awe of how far the detection capabilities of the system have advanced. This is in large part due to the platform that the CTBT provides for multilateral technical cooperation and collaboration. With a unified vision and sense of purpose, we have succeeded in not only living up to the ambitious expectations outlined in the Treaty, but in many cases far exceeding them.

And it's not just the global reach or resiliency built into the system that so impresses me, and it does. It is also the extraordinary sensitivity of the sensors deployed at the more than 300 IMS stations strategically located all around the globe.

This sensitivity allows us to achieve a detection capability far greater than what was once thought possible. And as our monitoring technologies and data processing capabilities improve, I am confident that we will continue to outperform these expectations.

Please let me illustrate. Many of you will recall in January, the explosive eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano in Tonga. What you might not be aware of is that this eruption was the largest event ever detected by the IMS infrasound network. As the pressure waves created by this violent interaction of magma and seawater spread throughout the atmosphere, our infrasound stations, all around the world, began to light up one by one.

Before long, every one of the 53 certified infrasound stations recorded signals from the event. But this isn't even the most impressive part. These stations picked up additional

signals for several days after the event as the pressure waves continued to propagate around the globe. A breath-taking example of the of the capability of the system.

We have long understood that the verification regime provides substantial additional value beyond the core mission of nuclear test monitoring. Be it tsunami early warning, contributing to earthquake detection or climate change research, the range of applications of this data is astonishing. I believe we are only scratching the surface on how this data can be utilized for the benefit of society and humanity as a whole.

I am committed to ensuring that countries derive the maximum benefits from this data, regardless of the size of their territory or their economy. We will continue to offer capacity development to help States participate fully in verification activities, as well as develop competencies in areas related to other civil and scientific applications.

In fact, I have often heard in my interactions with States that there is a keen desire for assistance in establishing national data centres and the provision of associated training. I am excited to announce that I am developing a new focused initiative in this area, which will be launched in the near future. This initiative is aimed at establishing a national data center and a level of capability in all State Signatories, that allows them all to receive and interact with the CTBT data and associated products and gain the full range of benefits.

Madam President,

With 185 signatures and 170 ratifications, we can be proud of the impressive progress made towards the CTBT's universalization. And I remain firm in my belief that our collective efforts to further increase adherence to the CTBT will continue to strengthen the Treaty, and solidify the already powerful international norm against nuclear testing.

In this, the 25th anniversary year of the CTBT, we are undertaking strategic and multi-tracked outreach to advance this goal. I have set a target for us to achieve at least five additional ratifications by the end of the anniversary year this September.

These efforts are already bearing fruit. I am pleased to share with you that The Gambia and Tuvalu have completed their ratification processes at the national level. During a recent mission to Latin America and the Caribbean, Dominica's Prime Minister Skerrit took the decision that his country would join the CTBT. With this important milestone, the Latin America and the Caribbean region will soon achieve full adherence to the Treaty.

I am deeply encouraged by the enthusiasm and excitement regarding the CTBT that I have encountered in my engagements and interactions with governments and representatives of

civil society. This Treaty has already accomplished so much, and with every year that passes our collective achievements continue to provide hope and optimism that our shared objective of a world free of nuclear testing is within reach.

I invite you to join in our noble efforts to secure this long-awaited disarmament and non-proliferation objective. With your assistance and support, I am confident that we will attain this goal, and thereby take an essential step forward towards a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Let us join together, in current context of heightened security concern, and in this 25th anniversary year of the CTBT, to turn the promise of the CTBT into a reality.

Thank you for your contributions and partnership.