



**Address by the Executive Secretary
Dr Lassina Zerbo**

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

**National Seminar on the CTBT
Luanda, 30 October 2013**

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address this National Seminar on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are grateful to the Government of the Republic of Angola, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola for hosting such an important and opportune event. I am also grateful to the European Union for its initiative and precious support in this regard, which once again illustrates the EU's commitment to the CTBT's universalization and entry into force.

The presence here today of the honourable Minister for National Defence of Angola, His Excellency Mr Cândido Pereira dos Santos Van-Dúnem, is a clear illustration of the importance that Angola attaches to this event.

I am also pleased that I had the opportunity to meet with His Excellency Foreign Minister Chikoty in September this year, when we discussed Angola's leading role in African peace and security and the importance of Angola's ratification of the CTBT.

Angola was amongst the very first countries to sign the CTBT after the Treaty was opened for signature, on 27 September 1996. Since the early days of the Preparatory

Commission, your country has been there – tirelessly participating in the work of the Commission and supporting the activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

The Permanent Mission in Vienna has been doing an exemplary job over the years, and I am particularly thankful to Her Excellency Ambassador Maria de Jesus Ferreira, Angola's Permanent Representative to the Commission, for her dedication to maintaining the highest level of cooperation between the Secretariat and the Government of Angola.

The recent progress in Angola's ratification of the CTBT is a natural – and most welcome – outcome of the strengthening of this cooperation over the years. Approval by the Council of Ministers last April was received with enthusiasm, and we are hopeful that the ratification process can be completed this year. This seminar is aimed precisely to assist such efforts.

We have amongst us today representatives from several institutions involved in the ratification process or in the subsequent implementation of the Treaty – the National Assembly, in particular through its External Relations Committee; the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, National Defence – represented by the honourable Minister himself –, Interior, Justice and Human Rights, Industry, Commerce, Social Communication, and Transports; the National Demining Commission in Angola; the National Customs Service; and the *Agostinho Neto* and *Lweji A N'Konda* universities. I believe that this show of commitment to the CTBT bodes well for the completion of Angola's ratification process.

The timing of this event and the renewed progress in Angola's consideration of the Treaty also comes in the context of redoubled efforts by the international community towards entry into force and universalization of the CTBT. With 183 States Signatories, we are proud to be one of the most adhered-to international arrangements in history, recently achieving – and even passing – the symbolic milestone of 160 ratifications.

In fact, it was another African Portuguese-speaking country, Guinea-Bissau, that became the 160th country to deposit its instrument of ratification of the CTBT in New York. Guinea-Bissau's ratification was soon followed by that of Iraq, whose symbolical value

in terms of sending a message of peace and security to the international community cannot, for historical reasons, be overemphasized.

As a country that has successfully achieved its own peace and internal reconciliation after decades of civil war, we can only applaud the magnanimous message that Angola would send to the world by ratifying a treaty that seeks to strengthen peace and security.

While the steady advancement in universalization conferred precious momentum to the Treaty over the years, lack of progress in ratification by the remaining eight Annex 2 States created a certain sense of frustration – and it is a well-known fact that frustration often paves the way for innovation. A month ago, a group comprising eminent personalities and internationally recognized experts was launched at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Through their expertise, experience and political standing, this Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) will support and complement efforts to promote the Treaty's entry into force, and reinvigorate international endeavours to achieve this goal.

The consultations that I have held so far with the Foreign Ministers and other high-level representatives from several of the States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force have been encouraging. I trust that this receptiveness – coupled with GEM's innovative and focused approach – will bring us closer to turning the CTBT into international law.

Angola's role as an important regional player and its increasing stature around the globe make me truly convinced that your country's ratification will make a key contribution to the process leading to the Treaty's entry into force.

But the CTBT is not only a political undertaking. Its strength resides precisely in the fact that it is underpinned by a solid verification system that makes treaty obligations truly verifiable. By signing the Treaty back in 1996, Angola not only expressed its consent to be bound by the objectives of the CTBT; it also gained access to the data that would allow it to monitor countries' compliance with the Treaty – on an equal footing with every other State around the globe.

Today, Angola and all other Signatory States have access to data and data products generated by the verification system, which is almost 85% complete. The data collected throughout the world by the stations that are part of the International Monitoring System are shared in real time with all States that have signed the Treaty. The utility of such data has been clearly demonstrated in the timely detection of the announced nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2006, 2009 and earlier this year.

As recent events have illustrated, however, the utility of this data transcends treaty verification. By detecting nuclear explosion in any environment – underground, underwater or in the atmosphere – the Treaty's monitoring technologies can also be used for other purposes than verifying compliance with treaty obligations. These civil and scientific applications were clearly demonstrated in the response of the system to the devastating East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in March 2011.

The announced tests by the DPRK and the Fukushima disaster are two powerful examples of why States Signatories should make full use of the data collected by the global monitoring system. I am hopeful that this seminar will further encourage Angola to establish its own National Data Centre with a view to receiving and utilizing this data. Again, in the context of Angola's renewed interest in the Treaty, the timeliness of this event to also promote the technical aspects of the CTBT and pave the way for enhanced cooperation in this regard could not be better.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have spoken of Angola, of the CTBT's political significance and of the Treaty's civil and scientific benefits. As a proud son of this continent, let me now speak of Africa.

What we have witnessed over the last few years is the progressive rise of Africa – and Africans – in world affairs. In this regard, this event serves to recognize such achievements by highlighting the importance of Angola, southern Africa and the continent as a whole in the international security architecture.

To build peace and safeguard itself against the threats posed by the most devastating kind of weapons, the world needs Africa's participation; in turn, to protect itself against the misuse of its territory and resources, Africa needs the legal arrangements and technical mechanisms offered by the non-proliferation and disarmament regime – of which the CTBT is an integral part.

Africa is not immune to such risks: it was on this continent that part of the uranium used to produce the first atomic devices was mined; and it was in Africa that two countries – under previous regimes – developed nuclear-weapon programmes that are now extinct.

In this context, the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in July 2009 was applauded by the international community. By establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone on their territory, Africans not only said no to nuclear weapons – thereby renewing at the regional level their undertaking under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty –, but they also closed the door to nuclear testing.

Moreover, after several years of successful leadership by Angola, a revitalized ZOPACAS has reaffirmed the importance of consolidating the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation, free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction – including by prohibiting, once again, nuclear testing.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that this seminar will facilitate and move forward the ratification process of the CTBT in Angola. I also hope that you will be inspired, as I am, to seize upon the new political momentum created in favour of the Treaty – and that, as a result, Angola will join the ranks of those who unequivocally outlawed explosive nuclear testing once and for all.

I also hope that Angola will enhance its participation in the Treaty's verification by utilizing the data made available to States; that it will also explore the numerous other

applications of such data; and that it will make use of all the opportunities offered by the Commission, including for capacity-building.

Let us seize the opportunity offered by this event.

With decisiveness and determination, we will succeed in banning nuclear explosions. Together, we can make a tangible contribution to global efforts towards the aim of eliminating the threats posed by nuclear weapons.

Thank you.
