

**Statement by Mr. Lassina ZERBO
Executive Secretary
CTBTO Preparatory Commission**

at the

**NDC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP IN AFRICA ON THE
USE OF IMS DATA AND IDC PRODUCTS WITH
EMPHASIS ON RADIOACTIVE AEROSOL AND NOBLE
GAS OBSERVATIONS**

*16 – 19 December 2013
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso*

Excellency Mr Tulinabo Salama Mushingi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Burkina Faso,

Excellency Mr Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the International Organizations in Vienna

Dear Guests,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“A-DANSÉ”! This means in Dioula, one the most widely spoken languages in Burkina Faso: **WELCOME!**

To begin with, I would like to express my thanks to our host for the warm welcome and the very good organization. I am grateful to the European Union for its sustained assistance to sustain our efforts in making the verification system a reality. I also wish to express to H.E. Ambassador Tulinabo Salama Mushingi my appreciation for the multifaceted support that we receive from the United States, in particular through Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

It is an honor to be here with you in Ouagadougou to mark the successful close of two of our flagship activities: (a) the wrap-up of the European Union Joint Action for the African Region and (b) the end of the measurement campaign with the Transportable Xenon Laboratory (TXL), conducted in Burkina Faso in cooperation with the United States PNNL. As a matter of fact, the choice of Burkina Faso to host this Workshop is justified by the fact that it enables to create synergies between the TXL and the Capacity-Building Programme, providing an excellent opportunity to reach out to the radionuclide experts in the Regions and this expanding our Capacity-Building sphere of activities.

Excellencies,

Dear Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The exceptionally high attendance of this Workshop – with 70 participants from 30 countries – demonstrates, once more, the importance that Africa attaches to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a means of enhancing peace and security, and promoting technological progress. It is also an indicator of how we have fared with our Capacity-Building Programme. Let me remind ourselves that the overall goal of the Programme was and remains to close the gap among our Member-States by enabling all States to fully participate in, and contribute to, the implementation of the CTBT verification regime.

When I took over the International Data Centre (IDC) Division back in late 2004, I had to face the reality on the ground: the uniquely democratic nature of the CTBT – giving to all Member States equal access to our data and products – was diluted by *de-facto* inequalities among NDCs. If we know that the NDCs are the national backbones of the CTBT verification system, this factual inequalities inherent in the resources and priority sets of each Member State, carried the potential to develop into political scepticism because more and more developing countries started questioning the CTBT regime and asking whether it was not just

another embodiment of the divide between the haves and the have-nots. It was with this in mind that the International Data Centre (IDC) Division had initiated the Capacity-Building Project which is jointly funded by the European Union.

Casting a quick look at the rear-view mirror, we have good reasons to be proud of our achievements. Currently, 60 percent of all African Signatory States and 73 percent of all African Ratifying States have established a Secure Signatory Account that enables to receive our data and products. This represents an increase of over 40 percent since we initiated the Programme five years ago. Alone for this year, four additional countries (the Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and the Sudan) have established an Account; and the presence at this Workshop of two others (Angola and Burundi) which have not yet done so, make us believe that more Accounts will soon be established. Another important development is that data and products usage in the Africa Region has exceeded the 1.5 million MB mark.

As for the TXL measurement campaign, it has allowed us to gather documented evidence of the low background xenon in the region which is consistent with atmospheric transport modelling results based known global sources. I will not say more on this because I do not want to preempt on the presentations that are scheduled during the relevant sessions of this Workshop. Nevertheless, I need to underscore that this is an unprecedented exercise: such a background measurement campaign has never been conducted in the region before.

Because of its success, the Programme has been extended to other Regions – which makes of all of you pioneers. As such, you should not rest on our laurels and lapse into self-satisfaction. On the contrary, each success story is merely a stepping stone to the next challenge. And I am sure that you will agree with me that there are many challenges ahead.

This brings me to the reason of our presence here today. As you know, the objective of the present Workshop is to strengthen your knowledge of the CTBT and the work of the Preparatory Commission through:

- (a) further building up your national and regional capacities in implementing the Treaty and participating in the verification regime, as well as promoting the civil and scientific application of verification technologies;
- (b) exploring how both waveform and radionuclide measurements can be used both for Treaty monitoring and civilian applications; and
- (c) understanding the background of the atmospheric radioactivity measurements and to seeing how man-made and natural background noise will affect the measurements.

However, beyond the above, I would like invite you to take stock of our Programme in the Region without complacency, highlighting the success stories but also the shortcomings; telling us how you benefitted from the Programme as well as how it could have been improved; shed light on the past to help us chart out together a course for the future based on our mutual expectations.

I know that it has not been easy to make time from other commitments in order to participate in this Workshop – especially on the eve of the Holiday Season. And I wish you to thank you for that. We should therefore make the most out of this opportunity. As the EU-funded part of

this Project comes to a close, we stand a crucial fork and the decisions that we will make from here may have lasting consequences.

Let us make it a chat among partners: frank, direct, honest, constructive and prospective – for the CTBT is first and foremost about partnership in noblest sense of the word because it is about shared values. As I said earlier, we share our commitment to strengthen peace and security. Together we share our belief in the ‘power of empowerment’, in the sovereign equality of States, and in multilateralism and solidarity among nations. I very much look forward to receiving the conclusions of your deliberations and to jointly implementing your proposals to further build and sustain NDC capacities, with a view to making the world safer and more secure.

In concluding, I would like invoke the memory of an acclaimed world icon, epitome of humankind, President Nelson Mandela, who left us about 10 days ago and whose legacy is a common heritage shared by all nations and human beings. It is an open secret that Mandela despised nuclear weapons and had consistently embraced an anti-nuclear-weapons position because he understood better than anyone that security was seamless. We all remember his vibrant appeal to the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons with this rather rhetorical question: *“We must ask the question, which might sound naïve to those who have elaborated sophisticated arguments to justify their refusal to eliminate these terrible and terrifying weapons of mass destruction – why do they need them.”* I encourage you to be inspired by this exceptional man and remember his words: *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”* My humble goal is that, through our Capacity-Building and Training Programmes, we are able to modestly contribute to positively changing our world.

Excellencies,
Dear Participants,
Dear Guests,

Allow me to seize this opportunity to wish you a Happy Festive Season and the best of success for the coming year.

I wish you a successful meeting and an enjoyable stay in Burkina Faso.

Thank you for your attention!