

Joint Ministerial Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) stands as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and its entry into force must be achieved without further delay. The universal and verifiable ban on any nuclear weapon test explosions, or any other nuclear explosions, established by the CTBT will contribute to a world without nuclear weapons by constraining their development and qualitative improvement. We, the Foreign Ministers issuing this statement, regard the CTBT as a major contribution to international peace and security and reaffirm our resolute determination to pursue its entry into force.

With signature by 184 States and ratification by 167 States to date, the CTBT is approaching universality. We welcome Thailand's ratification and Tuvalu's signature of the Treaty this year. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay, in particular the remaining eight States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty.¹ Their accession to the Treaty is vital to achieve the international community's goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

In previous CTBT Ministerial meetings, we have consistently expressed our condemnation of the nuclear weapons tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), of which there have been a total of six since 2006. We will never accept a nuclear-armed DPRK and are committed to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of the DPRK's nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs, and related facilities in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We welcome the Inter-Korean and USA-DPRK summits and ongoing diplomatic efforts, and note the DPRK's 20 April 2018 announcement that it would suspend its nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests as steps towards achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We continue to underline the need for a peaceful diplomatic resolution of the issue and we urge DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of priority.

It is evident to us that the conduct of nuclear weapon test explosions, which is in clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, is recognized as irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour among States. This understanding is reinforced by States' commitment to and ratification of the CTBT and by national moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, we call upon all States to maintain their existing national moratoria and to refrain from any action that would undermine the Treaty's object and purpose.

We recognize the valuable contribution of voluntary national moratoria to international peace and security as we continue our work towards the entry into force of the Treaty. However, it is evident that these individual and voluntary measures do not have the same permanent and legally-binding effect as

¹ There are eight Annex 2 States, whose ratifications are necessary for entry into force, which have yet to ratify the Treaty: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Pakistan and United States of America.

the entry into force of the Treaty, which would put an end to nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions. For this reason, we consider the entry into force of the Treaty to be of utmost importance.

Finally, we welcome ongoing developments towards completion of the CTBT verification regime. With nearly 300 certified stations now operating worldwide, the International Monitoring System has demonstrated its ability to provide the international community with independent and reliable means to ensure compliance with the Treaty once it enters into force. We urge the Preparatory Commission to continue the development of the CTBTO's International Monitoring System (IMS), International Data Center (IDC), and On-Site Inspection (OSI) capabilities, as well as its ongoing programme of capacity-building and training for national authorities in a balanced manner. We recognise the importance of individual States' financial commitments to ensuring its long-term sustainability and reaffirm our commitment to support the completion and maintenance of all elements of the verification regime, pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

While the detection of nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions remains the primary objective of the CTBTO, we also welcome the contributions its technical assets have been able to make to other scientific and civil applications, including the detection of earthquakes, volcanic activity and tsunamis, as well as the monitoring of nuclear accidents. We will continue our efforts to promote scientific cooperation among States in support of the verification regime, to raise awareness of the Treaty among the general public, including youth, and to advocate for it at the highest political levels. We urge all States signatories to support these efforts, in order to bring about the Treaty's entry into force as soon as possible.