

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

This year, as the international community marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature, we, the Foreign Ministers issuing this statement, stand united in our commitment to promote and pursue its entry into force without further delay.

We regard the Treaty to be a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and its entry into force as a major contribution to international peace and security. The total 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 welcome the significant progress made towards the universality of the Treaty, with signature by 183 States and ratification by 166 States to date. We particularly welcome a number of positive developments since our last meeting, including: the ratification of the Treaty by Angola, Myanmar, and Swaziland; the adoption of a Declaration and Measures to Promote the Entry into Force of the CTBT by the Article XIV Conference in September 2015; and the convening of the 20th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting in Vienna in June 2016.

There is more work to be done. **We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay, in particular the remaining eight States listed in Annex 2¹ of the Treaty. We appeal to all States to make the utmost efforts to achieve its prompt entry into force.** We dedicate ourselves individually and jointly to continuing to raise awareness among the general public and to advocate at the highest political levels. We must ensure that the resolute determination of the international community to bring the CTBT into force is finally realized.

Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, which remains our urgent goal due to its legally-binding effect, we call upon all States to maintain all existing moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions and to refrain from any action that would undermine the Treaty's object and purpose. However, these do not have the same permanent and legally-binding effect to end nuclear weapons testing and all other nuclear explosions, which will only be achieved by the entry into force of the Treaty. **We must finish the work we started twenty years ago.**

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is the only country that has conducted nuclear tests in this century. We condemn in the strongest terms its nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013 and in January and September of 2016 and demand that DPRK refrain from conducting further nuclear tests. We urge DPRK to fully comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and all its commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and immediately cease all related activities. We continue to underline the need for a peaceful solution of the DPRK nuclear issue.

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.

We welcome advances made by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its Provisional Technical Secretariat in ensuring the Treaty's verification regime is robust and world-class. Today, the International Monitoring System is nearing completion and, in addition to advancing the Treaty's primary nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objective, it plays an important role in scientific and civilian applications, including providing accurate, timely data about earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear accidents. We promote scientific cooperation between States in support of the verification regime and we reaffirm our commitment to support the effective and efficient completion and maintenance of all its elements and related capacity-building activities. We urge all States signatories to support these efforts and to bring about the Treaty's entry into force.