

2024 Joint Ministerial Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

1. We welcome the holding of the Ministerial Meeting of the “Friends of the CTBT” on September 24, 2024, emphasizing the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Since the last High-level Meeting of the “Friends of the CTBT”, which marked the 25th Anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT, the international security situation has continued to deteriorate. We are more than ever convinced of the need for global cooperation and the importance of standing united to solve the world’s most pressing issues. We regard the CTBT as a significant contribution to international peace and security.

2. The CTBT is a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime underpinned by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The entry into force of the CTBT would significantly strengthen the full implementation of the NPT. The CTBT is among the most widely accepted and most effective normative instruments to contain and reduce nuclear threats, and its entry into force must be achieved without further delay.

3. The CTBT – by eliminating nuclear testing once and for all – will bring us closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The CTBT’s legally-binding, universal and verifiable ban on “any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion” will constrain the proliferation, the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

4. With signature by 187 States and ratification by 178 States to date¹, the CTBT is approaching universality. Despite challenges, including the Russian Federation’s unprecedented decision to revoke its ratification of the Treaty, we applaud the persistent efforts of the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, Dr. Robert Floyd, to achieve further signatures and ratifications, and warmly welcome the availability of the Executive Secretary to serve for a second term to consolidate the gains he has achieved to date. We welcome ratifications by Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea, as well as the signing by Somalia. We continue to urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay nor precondition, particularly the now nine Annex 2 States.² Their accession to the Treaty would bring it closer to universality, advancing the global norm against nuclear testing and intensifying pressure on States to refrain from nuclear tests.

5. We recall our condemnation of the six nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK since 2006, that undermine the CTBT’s objective and purpose, and strongly urge the DPRK to fully comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and to take concrete actions towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear weapons, ballistic missile and related programmes. We reiterate that any new DPRK nuclear test would be irresponsible, unacceptable and in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. We call on the DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of priority.

6. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, we call upon all States to declare or maintain their existing national moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, as an example of responsible international behaviour that contributes to international peace and stability, and to refrain from any action that would undermine the Treaty’s objective and purpose.

¹ As of Sept 24, 2024

² There are nine Annex 2 states, whose ratifications are necessary for entry into force, which have yet to ratify the Treaty: China, DPRK, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic republic of), Israel, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

7. Finally, we welcome ongoing steps to complete the CTBT's verification regime. By the end of 2023, 306 verification facilities had been certified worldwide, representing over 90 percent of the network foreseen by the Treaty. We note the completion in several States Signatories of the respective segments of the International Monitoring System, bringing us closer to the planned network. The IMS 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. The system has also demonstrated its value by detecting every declared nuclear test that has taken place in the 21st century. Thus, even before the Treaty's entry into force, the monitoring and analytical elements of the verification regime are at the disposal of the international community, and such assets contribute to regional stability as a significant confidence-building measure.

8. The monitoring system's technical assets also have diverse scientific and civil applications that benefit all States, including monitoring nuclear accidents and detecting volcanic activity, earthquakes and tsunamis. On the latter, IMS seismic and hydroacoustic stations can detect and provide data in near real-time to tsunami warning centres. For example, the explosive eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano on January 15, 2022, was detected by every seismic, hydro-acoustic and infrasound facility of the CTBT's IMS worldwide. At present, 21 arrangements concerning tsunami warning centres in 20 countries have been signed, and centres participating in the Global Tsunami Warning System receive crucial data from around 100 IMS stations.

9. We urge the Preparatory Commission to continue developing the IMS, International Data Center (IDC) and On-Site Inspection (OSI) capabilities, and its ongoing programme of capacity-building and training for national authorities. We recognize the importance of individual States' financial commitments to the regular budget of the organisation to ensure the completion and maintenance of the regime and reaffirm our commitment to support the long-term sustainability of all elements of the verification regime, pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

10. We will continue promoting cooperation among States to support the verification regime, raise awareness of the Treaty and its benefits among the general public, including youth, and advocate for the Treaty at the highest political levels.

11. There is no doubt that the CTBT contributes significantly to the international security, non-proliferation and disarmament landscape. With more than 25 years passing since the Treaty opened for signature, and 22 years since the first Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the Treaty, its value is unquestionable. But we cannot take for granted the global norm against nuclear testing until it is legally-binding. As such, we urge all States that have not already done so to sign and ratify the Treaty and encourage States Signatories to support continued efforts to strengthen the Treaty and its verification regime, and to achieve its entry into force as soon as possible.