



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

Eleventh Ministerial meeting of the Friends of the CTBT

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As delivered

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Your Excellency, Foreign Minister Wong,
Executive Secretary Floyd,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary-General, allow me to express appreciation for the invitation extended to him to address this important biennial meeting. He regrets that, due to prior commitments, he is unable to join us today.

It is always a pleasure to be here with the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I thank the governments of Australia and Japan for organizing today's event and am gratified by the high level of participation, which speaks to the importance of the Treaty and the shared priority of upholding the norm against nuclear testing.

The Friends of the CTBT have been steadfast in their commitment and support to the CTBT and its Preparatory Commission, the CTBTO. Such commitment cannot be more timely. Since the last Ministerial meeting, in 2022, geopolitical tensions and conflict have only increased, alongside a rise in nuclear rhetoric, including whisperings about resumed nuclear testing. Regrettably, we have also seen the withdrawal of the ratification of the CTBT, by the Russian Federation.

It is easy to be discouraged. Perhaps too easy. But if we resign ourselves to these disheartening trends, we risk overlooking some other important developments.

We would risk overlooking the fact that, since the Friends last meeting two years ago, there have been five new ratifications of the CTBT – by Equatorial Guinea, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands and

Sri Lanka – and one new signature, by Somalia. I would like to acknowledge not only the decisions of those States, but the tireless efforts of the CTBTO and its Executive Secretary to achieve universal membership of the Treaty.

Indeed, we would also risk overlooking the fact that the vast majority of States – 178 of them – are parties to the Treaty. They support its goals and the work of the CTBTO in verifying its provisions through its International Monitoring System (IMS) and its International Data Centre.

And finally, we should not overlook the fact that the norm against nuclear testing remains strong. This demonstrates that, despite not having entered into force, the CTBT has had an important and positive impact. Even States yet to ratify the Treaty host IMS facilities.

Excellencies,

While it is important to recognize important progress made, I do not wish to paint an unduly rosy picture. The CTBT is not yet universal. And a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing is not sufficient. It is not a substitute for a legally binding prohibition on nuclear tests that can only be obtained through the CTBT's entry into force.

Therefore, and as always, I echo the Secretary-General's call for nuclear-weapon States to publicly reaffirm their testing moratoriums and to commit to actions that will not undermine the CTBT. I also call upon all States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so promptly and without preconditions – particularly those whose ratification is required to bring the treaty into force.

Finally, I applaud Dr. Floyd and his outstanding team for their tireless efforts in the face of an unforgiving geopolitical environment. They – as well as the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the international community as a whole – benefit from the dedication of the Friends of the CTBT in creating positive momentum for the Treaty’s entry-into-force.

Excellencies,

We owe to all the generations of people affected by nuclear testing and its legacy, and to future generations who have the right to live in a world free of threats of nuclear war, or intentional use or accidental explosion of nuclear weapons. In this regard, I would highlight last year’s General Assembly resolution on "Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons", which was a crucial step towards providing victim assistance and environmental remediation.

Collectively, we must re-establish momentum towards a world free of nuclear weapons. As always, the United Nations stands ready to do everything possible to support this laudable outcome. Primary responsibility for this of course belongs to states.

I thank you very much for your attention.