

UZBEKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



STATEMENT

by **H.E. Mr. Murad Askarov, Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations**

**Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

New York, 24 September 2009

Dear participants of the Conference,

Today the United Nations has adopted very important resolution on NPT, which elevates the issue of non-proliferation to be one of the key topics of international cooperation both within the United Nations and international security policy in general.

President Obama's leadership and initiatives on further reduction of strategic nuclear forces with the Russian Federation, planned for next spring in Washington D.C. conference on nuclear disarmament and today's statements by head of states and governments at the Security Council we hope will give a new impetus to effective international engagement on this very important issue, will further facilitate steady and systematic efforts of establishment of universal, transparent and just system of nuclear non-proliferation that would guarantee peaceful and sustainable development of future generation.

I would like to bring attention of this high level gathering to the real and effective contribution of my country to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. Today we heard that countries must lead the world community by examples. Exactly this notion can be fully applied to Uzbekistan's policy on non-proliferation in Central Asia regional dimension and globe as a whole.

The initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia by all interested countries and international organizations for the benefit of every State in the region, first announced by President Islam Karimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly on 28 September 1993, has been successfully implemented with active, highly effective and constructive cooperation of all countries of Central Asia, this initiative now is a reality. The Treaty is one of five nuclear-weapons free zones in the Globe and the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in the northern hemisphere. It directly borders two nuclear-weapon States.

The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force on 21 March 2009. This important event occurred following the ratification of the Treaty by all the States parties. The Treaty is of unlimited duration.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone occupies a special place in the process of strengthening international security. Nuclear-weapon-free zones date back to the cold war, a time when technological advances made the possibility of thermonuclear war and its consequences one of the most keenly discussed topics. Countless thematic conferences, round tables, analytical notes and simulated events resulted in a recognition on both sides of the Atlantic that there could be no expectation of survival in the event of a nuclear attack.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones became one of most effective ways to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to deal with past and potential future nuclear disasters, at a time when predictions were being made that nuclear safety and security in the post-cold-war era would become one of the most important challenges for many successive decades.

It is important that the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones is proceeding under the auspices of the United Nations and UN is actively encouraging the inclusion of non-nuclear-weapon States in this process. Indeed, it was to this very call that the Uzbek authorities first responded by proposing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and, to that end, emphasizing the interconnectedness and indivisibility of global, regional and national security.

The Central Asian initiative resulted from a careful examination of international experience in the area of non-proliferation and a recognition of Central Asia's role in strengthening global security.

The Republic of Uzbekistan's initiative was fully supported by neighbouring States — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia received consistent support within the framework of General Assembly resolutions and decision, and also in documents of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The sustainable development of the Central Asian region depends critically on a correct understanding of the nature of existing threats and the timely identification of their sources and interrelationships. Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction pose a particular threat. Central Asia is one of the most densely populated regions of the world, where the population lives in vulnerable conditions in every respect and where oasis settlements are already susceptible to various natural disasters.

The significance of the initiative put forward by President Islam Karimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan is explained by the increasingly important geostrategic position of Central Asia, with its abundant natural, mineral, energy, human and other resources, where the geopolitical and strategic interests of many of the largest States in the world converge. We support establishment of new nuclear weapons free zones in other regions of the globe, firmly believing that this coordinated and noble act of international cooperation will further regional and global security.

Furthermore, as President Islam Karimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan noted in his September 1997 speech in Tashkent at the international conference entitled "Central Asia — a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone", "Any political decisions and any intergovernmental acts will be worthwhile only if they are closely linked to social problems and to ensuring a decent life for people in society. The nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia is no exception. What exactly can it give people? The most important thing is that it contributes to security and sustainable development."

Thank you for your attention.