**STATEMENT**

**at the Conference on Article XIV**

**of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

(September 23, 2021)

 **Distinguished Co-Presidents,**

 **Ministers, Excellencies and Delegates!**

First of all, I thank the Co-Presidents of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Article XIV Conference for their efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the Treaty. I also commend Dr. Robert Floyd, the CTBTO Executive Secretary and the CTBTO staff, for their tireless work in promoting the universalization of the Treaty.

 **Ladies and gentlemen,**

 Now, 25 years since the opening for signature, CTBT remains a key pillar of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. As you know, Kazakhstan made a historic decision to stop nuclear weapon testing at Semipalatinsk in 1991. We have been particularly proud that this decision sent a strong political message to the international community and contributed to promoting the international efforts that led to the CTBT five years later. First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the decree to shut down the Semipalatinsk Test site on August 29. In 2009, this day was unanimously proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

**Dear colleagues,**

 Today’s Conference is an excellent opportunity to renew our strong call for concrete and coordinated actions. My country has worked very closely with the Preparatory Commission on the first ever Integrated Field Exercise in 2008, and as a Co-Chair for the Article XIV Conference in 2015-2017. Kazakhstan is also currently chairing Working Group “B”, and implementing a number of other joint projects. One such initiative is the first ever joint meeting of the Youth Group and of the Group of Eminent Persons in 2018 in Kazakhstan. We are convinced that the world leaders need to take concrete action to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. As we gather together to discuss the way forward, let me suggest to consider the following steps.

 First, it is necessary to establish and expand nuclear-weapon-free zones in as many regions as possible. In September 2006 in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan and four our neighbors signed the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. This nuclear-weapon-free zone was the first to be located in the Northern Hemisphere. To mark its 15th anniversary, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of five Central Asian countries have recently issued a Joint Statement. They stressed the need for strengthening the disarmament process and nuclear non-proliferation regime promoting regional and international peace and security, as well as expanding cooperation in the field peaceful use of atomic energy.

 Second, we must take advantage of Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As you know, this is the first ever multilateral, legally binding agreement to ban the development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. Its entry into force earlier this year highlighted our collective hope for a world free of nuclear weapons. We need to jointly turn it into a practical instrument, which meets all our hopes about nuclear weapon free world.

 Third, we must also end nuclear weapons testing, once and for all. This can only happen through the full ratification and compliance of the CTBT by the eight remaining Annex II states. In other words, the Treaty is totally undermined without unanimous support from all participating nations. Kazakhstan joins the majority of Member States in urging remaining states to ratify the Treaty without delay and without any preconditions.

 **Distinguished colleagues,**

I would like to stress that Kazakhstan will continue our tangible contribution to strengthening security arrangements, as well as disarmament objectives and mechanisms regionally and globally. It's my sincere hope that we will soon have an opportunity to get together in person to discuss our common goals and challenges. I wish you good luck and best of success in your future endeavors.

Thank you.