

Address by the Executive Secretary Of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

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High level Meeting on "Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations"

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The Secretary-General's initiative to call this important meeting is a reminder that multilateralism has not withered away. Multilateral disarmament negotiation and codification to face common security challenges is indeed still possible. It is the only way forward in a world of increasing complexity.

While the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament continues, there is today a renewed impetus for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. The political will of the international community is evident. But it is high time to translate political will into concrete action.

We need for the CTBT to enter into force. We need an FMCT. We need to eliminate nuclear weapons. Time is of the essence.

Treaties negotiated in the context of the CD are products of the politics of a specific time, driven by fears about the existence, if not use of particular type of weapons. The CTBT is anchored on fears fuelled by thousands of Cold War nuclear tests. It is the first post Cold War multilateral agreement in the nuclear field based on a fully verifiable, transparent and democratic verification system.

Yet, 20 years after the end of the Cold War and fourteen years after been signed, the CTBT continues to be a victim of Cold War style mistrust and suspicion. Without closing the books on the CTBT, incentives for negotiations, entry into force, and enforcement of an FMCT are weakened. As evinced by the second nuclear test carried out by the DPRK, continued testing results in the qualitative improvement of even crude nuclear devices. As long as the entry into force of the CTBT remains elusive, the propensity for further nuclear tests only increases.

Without the CTBT in force, how long can we be confident that existing testing moratoria will hold as states with nuclear weapons — inside and outside the NPT - continue to modernize their strategic forces? Countries with nascent nuclear programs will continue with the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. An outcome that would only amplify current and potential arms races in the most volatile regions of the world. Actualizing the multilateral verification mechanisms embodied in the CTBT and envisaged in an FMCT is of paramount importance if the international community is to succeed in realizing the objectives of a nuclear free world.

The member states of the CD have a clear choice: They can continue to stall negotiations of a treaty designed to cap quantitative improvements of existing nuclear arsenals and preventing additional states to require them. This inaction will only lead to disaster. It would allow states with nuclear weapons to continue producing fissile material for nuclear weapons. It would open the door for some states with aspirations to join the nuclear club. Alternatively, CD members and the wider international community can put aside their differences and start working for a safer and more secure world for generations to come.