



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

**High-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to
commemorate the International Day against Nuclear Tests**

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As delivered



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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to thank the President of the General Assembly, Her Excellency Ms. Annalena Baerbock, for convening this important annual commemoration.

I also thank Kazakhstan for its enduring leadership in establishing this Day and ensuring that the legacy of nuclear testing is never forgotten. As we mark thirty-five years since the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, that historic decision reminds us that remembrance must go hand in hand with responsibility.

I extend particular thanks to today's keynote speakers, who bring to this Hall the voices of communities affected by the horrors of nuclear testing and the scientific experts dedicated to ensuring it never happens again. Their testimony and expertise will ground our deliberations in both lived experience and evidence.

I want to take this opportunity to commend Dr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and the Provisional Technical Secretariat for their continued efforts to advance the CTBT's universalization and strengthen its verification regime.

Excellencies,

We must remember why this Day exists.

The Secretary-General's message is clear: "The world must never witness another nuclear explosion."

Not even one – whatever its stated purpose or intent.

That is the promise embodied in this Day and the responsibility entrusted to us.

Yet we meet amid deep geopolitical tension, growing division and diminishing trust. Against this backdrop, concerns about the possible resumption of nuclear explosive testing have re-emerged in recent years.

Even contemplating such a course is dangerous. Any resumption would erode decades of restraint, deepen mistrust and risk triggering reciprocal tests and an arms race. This must never become reality.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the CTBT's opening for signature.

Since then, the Treaty has helped establish a powerful global norm against nuclear testing. Its verification regime stands as a remarkable achievement in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation.

Together, the International Monitoring System and the International Data Centre provide objective and reliable data to help detect and locate events and assess whether they may indicate a nuclear explosion.

Yet one central challenge remains – the CTBT is not in force.

Its technical achievements are significant, but only the Treaty's entry into force can establish a permanent, legally binding prohibition on nuclear testing and unlock the CTBT's full potential.

The Treaty already enjoys near-universal support. Tonga's ratification last month brought the number of ratifying States to 179.

The remaining Annex 2 States must sign and/or ratify the CTBT without further delay and without conditions.

Until then, all States possessing nuclear weapons must maintain moratoria on all nuclear explosive testing. There can be no exceptions and no return to the past.

Distinguished delegates,

The urgency of these steps is measured not only in strategic risk but also in human suffering and environmental damage.

Nuclear tests have scarred lives, lands and descendants. Their consequences have crossed borders and generations. Communities continue to live with harm that was not of their making. The natural environment continues to bear damage that no political declaration can simply undo.

As the Secretary-General reminds us, “Their suffering is not history. It is a warning.”

The voices of those affected by nuclear testing are not echoes from a distant past. They must guide the choices we make in the present.

We owe them more than remembrance: our attention, our support and decisive action to ensure that such harm is never again inflicted on any person, community or environment.

Excellencies,

Nearly thirty years after the CTBT opened for signature, the world possesses the knowledge and tools to end nuclear testing for good. All that remains is the political will to act.

Let this Day renew our common commitment – not one more nuclear explosion and no further delay in bringing the CTBT into force.

We owe this to the victims and survivors. We owe it to their descendants. And we owe it to every generation that follows.

I thank you very much for your attention.