



CTBTO  
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

PUTTING AN  
END TO NUCLEAR  
EXPLOSIONS

**Statement to the 64th regular session of the  
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

**Preparatory Commission for the  
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

*22 September 2020*

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*Mr President,  
Director General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased and honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Dr. Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

At the outset, I would like to join the preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr President, on your election and wishing you and all participants fruitful deliberations. I also wish to reiterate our heartiest congratulations to Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi, on his election and reaffirm the CTBTO's readiness to further the cooperation between our two organizations.

The present session of the General Conference takes place against an unprecedented backdrop: COVID-19 pandemic and complexities in international politics. Both phenomena have had apparent impacts on the way global affairs are being conducted, which will undoubtedly reshape our world. While we navigate through one of the most severe global health crises in the history of humankind, we cannot afford the luxury of standing still: Peace and security cannot be put on the backburners.

At the CTBTO, we have been working diligently and creatively to keep up the performance of the International Monitoring System (IMS) at its highest. And I am happy to report here that the System has stood the test of the COVID-19 restrictions in force in most countries hosting IMS stations as continuous and close interactions with station operators have been maintained at all times and continuous daily operations of the IMS facilities have been ensured.

While it may be too early to precisely define how the post-COVID-19 world will look like, the pandemic clearly has reminded us of one thing: multilateral cooperation is the way to go if the world were to effectively address global challenges and efficiently manage global commons, such as nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As the world experiences a growing divide over defining issues, it has become clear that we will more and more resort to science-based evidence to restore trust and build stronger global coalitions. It is imperative that States work together in building bridges between the priority items on the global agenda.

The IAEA and the CTBTO, two organizations which share the same goal (i.e., safe and peaceful use of the atom) and similar tools (science-backed technology and multilateralism), are natural partners in addressing some of the most pressing issues facing the international community.

In a recent past, the complementarity between the mandates of our two organizations has earned us important strides in the field of nuclear safety, for instance. I reaffirm the CTBTO's readiness to make available its expertise, technologies and monitoring assets to any international process aimed at strengthening international peace and security. In that connection, if called upon to do so, we stand ready, within our mandate and with the approval of our Member States, to assist the international community in its efforts towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

In the run-up to the coming NPT Review Conference, it is of paramount importance to put a strong emphasis on the nexus between the CTBT and the NPT, and the need to bring the CTBT, the most practical and achievable step toward a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons, into force.

Thank you!