

**Statement to the 61st regular session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

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

21 September 2017

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty Organization.

The event that was picked up by the CTBTO's monitoring stations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 3 September 2017 likely constitutes yet another breach of the universally accepted norm against nuclear testing – a norm that has been respected by all countries but one in the 21st century.

Over 100 of our stations contributed to the analysis of the event. The resulting location shows that it took place in the area of the DPRK's nuclear test site. With a magnitude of 6.1, the event was significantly larger than earlier ones recorded by the system.

These facts reveal that the DPRK's nuclear programme is advancing rapidly. The stakes on the Korean Peninsula and in the entire region have risen as tensions escalate and security challenges mount.

These developments underline – yet again – the urgent need for the international community to act on putting in place a legally binding ban on nuclear testing once and for all.

It is therefore under a cloud of apprehension and uncertainty that we gather for this 61st regular session of the IAEA General Conference.

This is a concern shared with the IAEA. As the two principal pillars of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, we have a common vision – that of a safe and peaceful use of the atom. This vision excludes, by definition, the explosive testing of nuclear weapons.

The IAEA and the CTBTO share science as the elementary foundation of our activities and verification as the *sine qua non* condition for credibility. Combined, science and verification are the basis for the confidence that the international community places in our work. This is true for the evaluations that lead to the conclusion of whether a State is complying with its safeguards agreement; and it is true for the data collected by the International Monitoring System (IMS) and transmitted by the International Data Centre (IDC) to all CTBTO Member States.

Although verification is a major pillar of the IAEA's mandate, the General Conference is always an opportune reminder of the many other activities of the Agency in the field of nuclear safety, security, energy and nuclear applications, shared with Member States through technical cooperation projects.

We also encourage our own Member States to make full use of the civil, scientific and industrial applications of the approximately 15 gigabytes of data collected each day by the IMS. Whether it is to detect and provide real time warnings of earthquakes and tsunamis, track severe storm systems or radiation dispersal from nuclear accidents, or advance the study of meteorology, climate change and ocean life, IMS data offers a unique contribution to the development of human well-being. This was clearly demonstrated during this year's Science and Technology conference. With around 1,000 participants from over 120 countries, 650 abstracts, nearly 400 posters and over 100 oral presentations, it was the largest CTBTO S&T conference to date.

To leverage more fully these capabilities, the CTBTO participates in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is part of the UN sustainable development agenda. We also collaborate with the World Meteorological Organization, the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and many scientific and academic institutions. By extending and strengthening these partnerships in the years ahead, we will seek to make our work more accessible and visible to the international scientific community.

In this regard, particular attention is being given to those who can still succeed where our own generation has failed, and shape the future of a world without nuclear tests and, ultimately, without nuclear weapons. Established last year, the CTBTO Youth Group (CYG) has become a dynamic network of over 170 members from 52 countries.

Like the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) – albeit at a different level – their goal has been to revitalize the discussion around the CTBT and raise awareness about the importance of the nuclear test-ban. As such, the GEM and the CYG share the same final objective: through an innovative and focused approach, support and complement efforts to promote the Treaty's entry into force.

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Eight Annex 2 States have yet to ratify the CTBT for the Treaty to become global law, including the DPRK. It is hoped that the recent announced test will at least serve as the final wake-up call to the international community to outlaw all nuclear testing by bringing the CTBT into force – the most practical and achievable step toward a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear test announced on 3 September 2017 is a stark reminder of the risks that may lie ahead – both human and environmental – if we fail to ban nuclear test explosions without any further delay. It is also an opportunity for each one of us to question our resolve: have we done enough to avoid the unthinkable? It seems not – although your leadership can change this by bringing the CTBT closer to entry into force, and making the world a safer and more peaceful place.

Thank you.