Building on Success

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2024 Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
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Excellencies, Colleagues, Friends

Thank you, Mr Chair and your team,

For all you’re doing in this difficult period for international security.

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As I was preparing for this meeting today,

I looked back, to what I said at the corresponding event last year.

Then I outlined how the CTBT is right at the heart of the NPT:

-The ambition to stop nuclear testing is clearly set out in its preamble.

-The conclusion of a CTBT was included as part of the package for the NPT’s indefinite extension in 1995.

-Banning nuclear testing is right at the core of the NPT’s logic. At its very heart.

I described how the CTBT had transformed international security.

Before it was signed in 1996, over TWO THOUSAND nuclear weapons explosions.

Following the signing of the CTBT, fewer than ONE DOZEN test explosions.

And how the CTBTO’s International Monitoring System and International Data Centre, are globally respected scientific achievements!

How they deliver on transparency and trust, and deliver other civil and scientific benefits to all state signatories.
This year I don’t need to repeat all that.

It’s more than obvious. The CTBT is a resounding and popular success!

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And in the past year we’ve built on that success.

Yes, we’ve had one setback. The Russian Federation ‘deratified’ the Treaty.

Nevertheless, the Russian Federation has stated that its position on the CTBT has not changed and they remain committed to the Treaty and to their moratorium on testing.

Meanwhile, in the past year, PNG has ratified the Treaty. That’s a total, in the last 3 years, of 9 new ratifications and one state signing on their way to ratification.

And there are several other states on their way.

Let’s keep encouraging and supporting those states in this important work.

And above all, in the last year again we’ve seen NO NUCLEAR TESTS!

As each year goes by without test;

    the more powerful the emerging global norm against testing,

    and the more intense the likely outrage were any state to do so.

The widespread, almost universal chorus of support for a world free from nuclear tests is impressive and important.

It shows us that states and global opinion can mobilise around a Treaty that combines shared values, good ideas and smart technology to deliver what’s promised.

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So, at this PrepCom, I have two things to ask of you all.

Firstly, please take every opportunity, including at this PrepCom, to celebrate our collective achievements

and continue to make the case, loud and clear, for the importance of the CTBT for global peace and security.

I have greatly appreciated the partnership with so many of you, raising a global chorus of voices, celebrating and supporting the CTBT.
The second thing I ask of you, is to protect what we have, the CTBT - our precious treaty of great value to all humanity.

As successful as it is, the CTBT remains vulnerable and the verification system is incomplete.

We can help protect the treaty by encouraging all states that have committed to a moratorium on testing, to remain steadfast in that commitment.

A return to testing by any of those states could seriously damage the CTBT.

But ultimately, the entry into force of the treaty would provide the ultimate protection to the treaty and enable the full suite of verification mechanisms to be available to all states.

The nine states yet to ratify the treaty so it can enter into force, have a special responsibility in this regard.

I encourage each of you to consider afresh, what you can do to protect the CTBT from the possible consequences of inaction.

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The CTBT is a success story, but we should never take our success for granted!

As we confront the many challenges which face this review process, and the international security agenda more widely, we must not let this critical issue, the CTBT, sink down the global agenda or risk drifting into ritual or platitudes.

We must collectively push back hard against any such complacency.

We should focus on what we CAN agree on. We should not lose sight of our successes.

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Colleagues, Mr Chair,

The CTBT is agreed and endorsed by most countries on Earth and it is already delivering a real benefit, both for global peace, and for the scientific communities of those states which have signed it.

Multilateralism at its best!

It is already a success. Let’s build on that success.

Let’s push ahead to the 2026 Review Conference in that spirit.

Thank you.