



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Bozkir . . . . . (Turkey)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## High-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests

### Agenda item 103 (continued)

#### General and complete disarmament

**The President:** In accordance with resolution 72/51, of 4 December 2017, the General Assembly will begin its high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests. I will now deliver a statement from the rostrum.

#### Statement by the President

**The President:** We are meeting together to mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests for the twelfth time. Today we commemorate the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan on 29 August 1991. We remember the victims of nuclear testing. We honour the survivors. We examine the legacy impact of nuclear weapons, including of nuclear waste. More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted since the advent of nuclear weapons, and while the rate of testing has declined, it has not stopped. These tests have long-lasting consequences for our health and environment. They devastate the communities they affect. They displace families from their homelands. Nuclear testing is also catastrophic for the environment, and today we will discuss the effect of nuclear testing on sea levels and climate change.

Today many Member States will once again reiterate their demand that nuclear testing be ended forever and nuclear weapons outlawed. The General Assembly has been committed to nuclear disarmament from its inception. The very first resolution adopted in 1946 (resolution 1(I)) was aimed at achieving global nuclear disarmament. I welcome the progress that has been made towards nuclear disarmament in the past year, especially considering the additional challenges that the coronavirus disease pandemic has brought. That includes multilateral efforts. The fiftieth instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was deposited with the United Nations on 24 October and the Treaty therefore entered into force on 22 January. And the bilateral Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, also known as the New START Treaty, was extended for an additional five-year period, through 4 February 2026.

However, there is still much more to be done. I urge for meetings that were postponed to be rearranged. That includes scheduling the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for no later than February 2022 and setting a date for the fourth Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. And since my term as President of the General Assembly comes to an end in a few days, I would like to take this opportunity to call on States that have yet to sign or

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ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

In accordance with rule 70 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to address the Assembly in a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

**Mrs. Nakamitsu:** This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan, the largest nuclear test site in the former Soviet Union. The closure of that site, where more than 450 nuclear tests took place, signalled the end of an era of unrestrained nuclear testing. Five years later, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted in a landmark moment for multilateralism and nuclear disarmament. All told, more than 2,000 nuclear tests are known to have been conducted by eight States, many of them in some of the most remote and pristine environments in the world. They caused enormous human suffering and destroyed ecosystems that will take decades, if not centuries, to heal.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty bans all explosive nuclear-weapon tests anywhere, by any country, and is the centrepiece of global efforts to eliminate nuclear tests once and for all. The Treaty has the power to protect future generations from the human suffering and environmental catastrophe produced by nuclear tests. The CTBT is an invaluable contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. It is a powerful barrier to the development of new weapons, putting a brake on the nuclear arms race. But despite its near-universal acceptance, the full potential of the CTBT has not been realized, because it has not yet entered into force. I once again urge the States that have not ratified the CTBT to do so without delay. The eight States whose ratifications are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force have a special responsibility, but all States should commit to a legally binding prohibition.

As we mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests, let us all reflect on the tremendous human and environmental damage caused by decades of nuclear tests. And let us renew our commitment to ending all nuclear tests by anyone, anywhere.

**The President:** I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her statement.

Before proceeding further, and as indicated in my letter dated 2 September 2021, I should like to consult members with a view to inviting the following speakers to make keynote statements at this commemorative meeting: Mr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; Ms. Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York; Ms. Sue Coleman-Haseldine, a Kokatha nuclear test survivor and representative of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Australia; and Ms. Danity Laukon, a former member of the Marshall Islands Student Association.

If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite these speakers to make statements at this commemorative meeting?

*It was so decided (decision 75/576).*

**The President:** As also indicated in my letter dated 2 September 2021, Ms. Coleman-Haseldine and Ms. Laukon will both deliver pre-recorded statements. In that regard, pursuant to decision 75/558 of 19 March 2021, the pre-recorded statements will be played after the introduction by the President of the General Assembly and, in addition to the verbatim record of the plenary meeting, the President of the General Assembly will circulate, as a document of the Assembly, a compilation document of the statements delivered by means of pre-recorded statements, which will be attached to the verbatim record of the meeting.

I now invite Mr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, to make a keynote statement.

**Mr. Floyd** (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address the General Assembly on this important issue. I would also like to convey my appreciation to High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General. It is a pleasure to share this podium today, including with speakers from my own Asia-Pacific region — Ms. Sue Coleman-Haseldine, from Australia, and Ms. Laukon, from the Marshall Islands — on an issue that is very important to our region.

As we commemorate this important day, it is essential that we continue to listen to the voices of those who have been affected by the tragic consequences of

nuclear testing. Thirty years ago, as we heard earlier, the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, signed a decree closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site known as the Polygon, in a bold and visionary act. But two weeks ago I stood at one of the ground zeroes at the Semipalatinsk site. It was a sobering experience. With more than 450 nuclear tests conducted at the Polygon and a total explosive yield equivalent to 2,500 Hiroshima bombs, the scope of the impact on human health and the environment may never be fully understood. Yet for the communities affected by exposure to nuclear tests, there and at other nuclear test sites around the world, including in my own country, the pain and anguish is representative of the sad legacy of an era of unrestrained nuclear testing.

But let us also not lose sight of the even greater suffering and loss that would result from a nuclear war, which would tear apart every shred of our collective humanity. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a non-proliferation and disarmament objective that was decades in the making. It was negotiated with the aim of pulling the world back from the nuclear precipice and putting us on a stable path towards the elimination of this most destructive force conjured by humankind.

The CTBT is a success story, even though it has not yet become legally binding. Since its opening for signature 25 years ago this month, there has been near-universal adherence to the norm against nuclear testing that is underpinned by the Treaty. With 185 State signatories and 170 ratifying States, support for the Treaty continues to grow. However, the only way to put in place an enduring and verifiable prohibition on nuclear testing is through the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT. The promise of a world without nuclear weapons is not possible unless the international community comes together on this important cause. The CTBT has proved to be an effective measure for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, but we cannot rest easy on the successes of yesteryear. We must acknowledge that our work is not fully done and do all we can to bring the Treaty into force and complete its verification regime.

Let us commit together to ensuring that the world never again suffers from the disastrous consequences of nuclear testing, to reducing nuclear risk, preventing nuclear war and building a safer and more secure world for future generations by taking concrete actions to advance nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We can achieve these noble goals by taking every opportunity to advance the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT. In so doing, we will have demonstrated that the promise of a nuclear-weapon-free world is within our reach.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Ms. Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York.

**Ms. Okeke:** On behalf of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, I commend the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting to mark the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests. I also extend deep appreciation to High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General. We also commend the Government of Kazakhstan for its commitments over the years to promoting the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, having experienced first-hand the devastating effects of nuclear testing on its territory of Semipalatinsk.

Ensuring that nuclear science and technology are used exclusively for peaceful purposes is the basic pillar upon which the IAEA was established more than 60 years ago. For the past six decades, the IAEA has helped prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while making nuclear science and technology available for peaceful purposes, especially to developing countries. Nuclear science and technology help countries to reduce poverty and hunger, generate electricity, manage water resources, treat such diseases as cancer, respond to climate change and much more.

The agency contributes directly to the achievement of 9 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We help nations from Africa, Asia and Latin America to harness the power of nuclear science to boost crop yields, learn isotopic techniques that reduce the need for irrigation and fertilizers, sterilize pests and cut the use of harmful pesticides, and break down the plastic polluting our oceans. We help them irradiate food to boost its longevity for export, analyse water supplies, rebuild war-torn cities and benefit from the huge advances of nuclear medicine in detecting and curing cancers.

It is essential that nuclear technology is used safely and securely. While nuclear safety and security are the responsibility of States, the IAEA serves as the international forum in which countries work together

to develop safety standards and security guidance and share best practices. The IAEA helps its member States fulfil their responsibilities in these areas by developing safety standards that may be used as the basis for national regulations and by providing upon request a variety of services, including expert review missions.

In addition, the IAEA plays a leading role as a global platform for strengthening nuclear security. Countries increasingly seek our help in minimizing the risk of nuclear and other radioactive materials falling into the hands of terrorists. We provide nuclear-security training, help countries to improve the physical security of facilities at which nuclear materials are held and maintain the most authoritative global database on illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials.

In February 2020, the IAEA successfully organized the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts, which was held in Vienna and brought more than 1,900 participants together to share experiences and achievements in nuclear security. Member States adopted a ministerial declaration affirming their support for nuclear security.

Another core function of the IAEA is to verify that countries are not working to acquire nuclear weapons. Agency inspectors conduct verification at nuclear facilities all over the world. They bring back samples which are analysed for possible traces of nuclear material.

The IAEA is the competent authority the international community has entrusted to verify States' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations to maintain exclusively peaceful nuclear programmes. We do this by implementing safeguards, internationally approved legal and technical missions in 185 States, of which 182, are State parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, 137 of these 185 States have brought additional protocols into force, giving the Agency greater access to locations and information.

The Director General has strengthened outreach activities with State parties, including sending letters recalling these obligations under the NPT, for instance, calling on States with small quantities protocols based on the old standard test to amend or re-sign them. This is essential to addressing a weakness in the IAEA safeguards system recognized by the Board of Governors more than 15 years ago. The old standard

small-quantities protocol is not adequate for our current safeguards system.

A key milestone in the IAEA's work was the establishment of a low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan, which has been operational since December 2019. The bank is a mechanism of last resort for member States in case the supply of low-enriched uranium to a nuclear-power plant is disrupted due to exceptional circumstances that disable securing the fuel from the commercial bank markets or any other supply arrangements. The IAEA would like to once again thank the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting this important facility and for the excellent cooperation with the Agency in this regard.

The past year and a half have been particularly challenging. The coronavirus disease has forced member States off their path towards fulfilling their SDGs. In response, the IAEA launched what has become the largest emergency operation in its history, delivering real-time polymerase chain reaction testing kits to nearly 130 countries, thereby benefiting more than 28 million people. And, last year, to reduce the risk of the next zoonotic disease outbreak, the IAEA launched the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative to better prepare countries to deal with future pandemics through the use of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques.

"Preparing for zoonotic outbreaks: the role of nuclear science" is the theme of this year's IAEA Scientific Forum, to be held on 21 and 22 September 2021 at the margins of the sixty-fifth session of the IAEA General Conference. The event will include participation of such sister organizations as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Organization for Animal Health and the World Health Organization.

Finally, the IAEA continues to assist States in characterizing residual radioactivity in areas affected by nuclear-weapon tests so as to assess whether the safe use of such land is possible or remedial actions are needed. For example, the IAEA has assisted the Government of Kazakhstan over the years to assess the radiological contamination of land affected by the nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk site and surrounding areas. The IAEA is currently implementing a technical cooperation project focused on strengthening national capabilities to assess the feasibility of releasing parts of the Semipalatinsk test site to normal economic use.



This work will continue in the years to come and serves as a reminder of the long-term hazardous effects of nuclear testing.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm the IAEA's firm commitment to contributing to a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests. By exercising credible nuclear verification and by promoting effective nuclear security, the IAEA is making a tangible contribution towards this end.

**The President:** In accordance with decision 75/558 of 19 March 2021, I now introduce the pre-recorded statement of Ms. Sue Coleman-Haseldine, a Kokatha nuclear-test survivor and member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Australia.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see A/75/1019).*

**The President:** Pursuant to decision 75/558, I now introduce a pre-recorded statement by Ms. Danity Laukon, a former member of the Marshall Islands Student Association.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see A/75/1019).*

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Gabon, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

**Mr. Biang (Gabon):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The African Group would like to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for your support for nuclear disarmament. We also appreciate the valuable message delivered by Mrs. Nakamitsu on behalf of the Secretary-General and the statement by the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

The fact that we are meeting here today is a demonstration of our willingness and determination to see an end to nuclear tests as an essential step on the road to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To that end, the African Group supports the goals of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose aim is to enforce a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests with all the attendant ramifications, and to see the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons cease entirely.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In that context, the African Group emphasizes the urgency of ensuring that our world, including outer space, is free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to global peace and security as well as the future survival of humankind. The African Group supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as the ultimate prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. It is in that spirit that we want to recall the historic entry into force on 22 January of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Group therefore urges all members of the international community, especially nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called nuclear umbrella, to seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible, as well as to pursue the goal of a nuclear-free world.

The Group reiterates its deep concern about the nuclear-weapon States' slow progress in accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The African Group therefore insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the NPT, including the commitments to achieving the universality of the NPT and the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction.

The African Group underscores the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world to the overall objectives of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, thereby enhancing global and regional peace and security. In that context, we reiterate our commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which affirms Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and represents a shield for Africa's territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of those weapons on the entirety of the African continent.

The African Group would also like to recall the convening, pursuant to decision 73/546, of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and calls on all the invited States to continue to engage constructively and in good faith in order to negotiate a legally binding treaty that satisfies the implementation of the resolution on the

Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The African Group wishes to stress that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and basis on which the NPT was indefinitely extended and underlines the continuing validity of that resolution until its objectives are achieved.

Our Group reiterates its regret that the ninth NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a final outcome document, despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those in Africa. As we look forward to the tenth Review Conference, the Group calls on all States to work to preserve the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty and achieve its objectives through the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive outcome document.

The African Group emphasizes humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons, particularly its serious concerns about detonations of nuclear weapons, whether carried out accidentally or deliberately. The Group calls on all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among other things, and to take the necessary measures to dismantle and renounce such weapons.

The African Group reiterates the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, while taking into account the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States. We believe that the CTBT offers hope for halting the further development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We call on the international community to renew its support for promoting the CTBT's entry into force, and urge the nuclear-weapon States, as well as those that have not yet acceded to the NPT, that are listed in annex 2 of the Treaty and have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, to do so without further delay.

In conclusion, the African Group once again calls on all States to work unceasingly to facilitate the expeditious entry into force of the CTBT in order to fulfil the goal and objectives of a nuclear-weapon-free world, while taking into account the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Andorra, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

**Mr. López Lavado** (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's high-level plenary meeting to mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests, in accordance with resolution 72/51. We welcome Mr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, to today's meeting. We also welcome Ms. Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York, as well as the representatives of civil society.

Resolution 72/51 recalls that 29 August was established as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Its goal is to educate the public and raise awareness about the effects of explosive nuclear-weapon tests and other nuclear explosions and about the importance of ending them in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We underscore the essential role played in this area by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia and the media. We would also like to acknowledge the importance of education as a tool for peace and security, disarmament and non-proliferation. We firmly believe that every effort must be made to put an end to nuclear tests so as to end the devastating and harmful threat their effects pose to people's lives and health and to the environment. Those effects can leave no one indifferent. We call for an end to nuclear tests to ensure a better and safer world.

The Group condemns in the strongest terms the six nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions on the issue. Those resolutions demand full respect for all the obligations outlined in their provisions, especially the obligation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear programme and refrain from conducting new nuclear tests. We reaffirm our support for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, in a peaceful manner, and encourage all parties to commit to an ongoing dialogue.

*Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The Group underscores the vital importance of ensuring the timely entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, particularly those whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, to do so as soon as possible. We beseech all States to refrain from conducting explosive nuclear-weapon tests and all other nuclear explosions. We also call on all States to declare and maintain moratoriums in that regard and refrain from any act that runs counter to the goals of the Treaty.

We commend the signatory States for their contribution to the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, especially efforts made to ensure that the verification regime can meet the Treaty's demands regarding verification of its entry into force, as stipulated in article IV. We urge the States concerned to continue their endeavours in that regard.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

**Mr. De La Fuente Ramirez (Mexico):** I have the honour to speak at this high-level meeting on behalf of the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

At the outset, CELAC would like to express its appreciation to the President for convening this high-level meeting and to the delegation of Kazakhstan for its initiative and untiring efforts in that regard. We thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her statement today, and the Secretary-General for his support on this issue. The Community is also grateful for the participation of Ms. Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York, and Mr. Robert Floyd, whom we congratulate on his recent appointment as Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. CELAC also underscores the importance of the testimonies of the representatives of civil society and the nuclear-test survivors who addressed the General Assembly today.

CELAC would like to recall resolution 64/35, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2009, and resolution 72/51, of December 2017, which declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests. That International Day is devoted to enhancing

public awareness and education about the effects of explosive nuclear-weapon tests and any other nuclear explosions, and about the need to put an end to them as one of the means to achieve our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, CELAC reiterates its firm condemnation of any type of nuclear test anywhere in the world, and insists that all States refrain from carrying out nuclear tests, explosions or any other relevant non-explosive testing, including subcritical experiments and those conducted through simulations aimed at developing and improving nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Such actions are contrary to the object and purpose of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and run counter to the obligations and provisions contained in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. They are also against the spirit and the letter of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), thereby undermining its impact as a measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

CELAC welcomes the fact that 185 States have signed the CTBT and 170 States have ratified it, including 36 of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. In that regard, CELAC welcomes the Comoros' signature and Cuba's ratification of the Treaty in 2021 and highlights the significant steps made towards its universalization. Nevertheless, we reiterate the vital importance and urgency of the early entry into force of the CTBT and urges the States that have not yet done so to take the necessary measures to sign and ratify it without further delay.

CELAC reiterates the full validity of the declarations on nuclear disarmament adopted by the Community on 20 August 2013 in Buenos Aires; on 29 January 2014 in Havana; on 29 January 2015 in Belén, Costa Rica; on 27 January 2016 in Quito; and on 25 January 2017 in Punta Cana, in the Dominican Republic. CELAC emphasizes the urgent need to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, because a world without nuclear weapons is fundamental to the fulfilment of the primary objectives of humankind, such as peace and security, development and protection of the environment. In that regard, CELAC restates its deep concern about the existence, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as their humanitarian impact. CELAC strongly emphasizes that nuclear weapons must not be used under any circumstances, and that their use or threat of use constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including

international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

CELAC notes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which bans the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, entered into force on 22 January. It has joined the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as milestones on the path towards the elimination of such weapons of mass destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and within clearly established time frames.

Finally, CELAC affirms the status of its region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and reiterates its commitment, endorsing the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, to continuing to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute to general and complete disarmament in order to strengthen confidence among nations.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Brunei Darussalam, who will speak on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

**Ms. Sulaiman** (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Robert Floyd on his appointment as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the first from the Asia-Pacific region, and to express our support for his efforts in promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

While the coronavirus disease pandemic has understandably been dominating public debate, the dangers of nuclear testing must continue to be a focus of our attention.

Recent developments in the global security landscape such as the ongoing rivalries between major Powers, the modernization of nuclear arsenals and tensions on the Korean peninsula remain real and alarming. On that note, ASEAN calls on all Member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to demonstrate good faith, promote mutual understanding, enhance cooperation

and ensure responsible and collective action in striving for a world without nuclear weapons.

ASEAN underlines its collective position against nuclear tests and continues to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT. All of us have ratified the CTBT, which solidifies and bolsters our strong commitment to the international norms against nuclear testing. In that regard, we join others in urging the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible so that its entry into force may finally be realized.

ASEAN deplores the conduct of nuclear tests, which are contrary to international efforts and norms against nuclear testing, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions. We reiterate our recognition of the dire consequences of the use of nuclear weapons for people's health, socioeconomic livelihoods and the environment.

We reaffirm our recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also look forward to its tenth Review Conference, to be held next year. In that regard, ASEAN calls on the State parties to the NPT to renew their commitments to its implementation and to support the realization of article VI of the NPT.

ASEAN also stresses the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones and their contribution towards advancing the existing global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We also urge all Member States, including the nuclear-weapon States, to support ASEAN in moving towards that aspiration. Moving forward, we will continue to engage the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

Overall, ASEAN stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on SEANWFZ (2018–2022). At the same time, we continue to support ongoing efforts towards the establishment of such zones globally, especially in the Middle East.



In addition to the NPT, the CTBT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, including the SEANWFZ Treaty, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force on 22 January 2021, provides that each State party undertakes never under any circumstance to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The TPNW is a historic agreement that contributes towards global nuclear disarmament and complements other existing nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. In line with the foregoing, ASEAN supports the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament as a comprehensive step to advance nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in a concrete, holistic and integrated manner.

The world is at risk from nuclear weapons. Their continued existence may increase the sense of security for a few but is truly harmful to the collective security of all. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a global issue that requires the participation of all of us through strengthened partnership, in particular the effective contribution of women and youth to create and maintain an atmosphere of collective trust in promoting concerted actions towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Prasad (Fiji):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of 12 Members from the Pacific small island developing States.

As the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly draws to a close, I wish to thank His Excellency President Bozkır for the excellent leadership he provided throughout this year. Every year, when we convene for this debate, it is a painful and constant reminder of the devastating, indiscriminate and long-lasting impacts of nuclear weapons on people in the Pacific and across the world. It has been more than 20 years since the Assembly designated 29 August as a day to call for an end to nuclear testing.

More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted around the world and have impacted the lives of millions of people throughout the world. We acknowledge the role and the efforts of the United Nations, Member States and civil society in promoting the agenda on nuclear disarmament. We especially look forward to the efforts of the new Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, who is one of

our own and whom I congratulate for taking this work forward with great energy and determination.

Nuclear disarmament cuts across all pillars of the Charter of the United Nations. It impacts international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. We recognize that while progress has been made, a lot more needs to be done if we are to achieve the ambition and the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It has been 50 years since the NPT came into force — a landmark treaty; we said it then and reiterate it now.

The international community has yet to achieve the goals of the Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which complements the NPT by banning all nuclear weapons, provides a pathway forward. The framework for the monitoring of nuclear tests is operational and effective, but that important Treaty has yet to enter into force, and we call on all States to sign and ratify it if we are to achieve its ambitions and goals.

In the Pacific region, the cost of nuclear testing for our communities has been very high, and the impact continues to be felt across communities spread throughout the Pacific. Between 1946 and 1966, there were some 300 nuclear tests carried out in the atmosphere, underground and underwater, with a combined force of nearly 11,000 Hiroshima bombs. Communities continue to suffer from the impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific, as we have heard in the videos. Communities that were relocated have yet to return to their homelands. Communities continue to have restricted access to the marine resources that are a part of their livelihoods.

The intergenerational health impacts continue to be felt with a great deal of intensity. Radioactive waste and material that were buried underground are now exposed to sea-level rise, and new threats are arising as a consequence. Those hazards remain with us, and that is why the Pacific is speaking in this forum with a strong commitment.

We acknowledge the efforts of our civil-society leaders and of our people who have tried to establish a South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free zone to end nuclear testing in the Pacific. We have a vision that the Blue Pacific will be an ocean of peace for our people and for the world. Protecting the Blue Pacific is of great importance to our people. It is even more important to the planet as it fights the impacts of climate change. A Pacific that is contaminated by nuclear testing will

continue to impede our progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

On this day, we pay tribute to all victims of nuclear tests in the Pacific and around the world. We call on the international community for even greater and more sustained action for achieving climate justice for victims of nuclear testing in the Pacific and across the world.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Mr. Gonzato** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

This high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests is another opportunity to highlight the need for the entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is a top priority for the EU. The CTBT is one of the key pillars of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, contributing to global peace and security. The Treaty's strong legitimacy and vital importance for our collective security is pointed out in Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) and the annual General Assembly resolutions relating to the CTBT. The EU will continue to rally support for the CTBT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in all the relevant multilateral forums, including at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also encourage engagement with civil society to promote the CTBT. In that context, we commend the work of the CTBTO Youth Group.

As this year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CTBT's opening for signature, we urge all States to strive for the Treaty's entry into force and work constructively towards an early consensus on the draft ministerial declaration for adoption by the Article XIV Conference in New York on 23 September. This event provides a platform for engaging at the political level with the remaining annex 2 States — China, Egypt, Iran, Israel and the United States — that still have to

ratify the Treaty, as well as with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India and Pakistan, which still have to sign and ratify it in order to bring it into force. The EU strongly encourages high-level attendance by all States at the Article XIV Conference and urges non-ratifying countries to step up their efforts before the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

The EU member States did their part by ratifying the Treaty years ago, and will continue to call on the remaining countries to do the same, without any preconditions or further delay. We welcome the latest ratifications by Cuba and the Union of Comoros, bringing their number to 170. In the meantime, it is also crucial that all States fully observe the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and other nuclear explosions and refrain from any actions contrary to the object and purpose of the Treaty.

The EU urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to embark on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and to immediately comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, the EU encourages the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to further engage in meaningful discussions with all the relevant parties in order to achieve lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to give effect to its stated intention to end nuclear testing by signing and ratifying the CTBT. The EU hopes for tangible progress leading to the complete, verifiable and irreversible closure of the country's nuclear test sites. In that context, the CTBTO and its expertise could make an important contribution. Following the nuclear tests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the CTBTO demonstrated its invaluable role in quickly providing reliable and independent data, enabling the international community to respond appropriately and swiftly. The CTBTO has provided the world with a truly global, high-tech monitoring system for nuclear explosions, something that no single country could do.

The EU reiterates its confidence in the CTBT's verification regime and looks forward to the completion of the International Monitoring System (IMS). We recognize the deterrence effect against non-compliance with the Treaty and the ability to respond to threats to international peace and security that it provides. The EU and its member States commend the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and the States signatories for their demonstrated commitment to keeping the

verification regime working during the coronavirus disease pandemic. We urge all States signatories that still have to establish stations to cooperate with the Provisional Technical Secretariat to that effect and ask the relevant States signatories to assist in this process. Considering that the construction of the International Monitoring System has been ongoing for over 20 years, there is no excuse for further delay in certifying and operating all stations. EU member States are currently operating 44 stations of the IMS network.

In addition to the CTBT's obvious contribution to international peace and security, the CTBTO's integrated capacity-building assists States in using IMS data for civil and scientific applications and research associated with Treaty-related verification technologies, including tsunami and volcanic-ash-cloud warnings. To make the best use of our collective investment, the EU advocates fully exploiting the potential benefits of the civil and scientific applications of IMS data and financially supports capacity-building for developing countries in that regard. However, the CTBTO can carry out its mandatory functions only if provided with the necessary funding to support the completion and sustainability of these tools. We therefore call on all the States concerned to honour their financial obligations and step up their political support for the CTBT and the CTBTO.

Since 2006, the EU has provided the CTBTO with voluntary contributions of more than €29.5 million to fund a variety of technical projects aimed at strengthening the verification regime and building capacity in developing countries. The EU's eighth consecutive voluntary contribution, amounting to €6.3 million, entered into force on 1 December 2020, thereby ensuring the EU's long-standing support for the CTBTO's monitoring and verification capabilities and the uninterrupted implementation of ongoing activities. We look forward to closely cooperating with the Executive Secretary, Mr. Robert Floyd, and assure him of our full support in our collective efforts to promote the universalization of the CTBT and its entry into force, as well as regarding the continued development of the verification regime.

As a further sign of our commitment, the EU has become a supporter of 10 actions on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, including promoting the CTBT's entry into force. EU member States have consecutively assumed responsibility as co-coordinators for the biennial conference to promote

the entry into force of the CTBT, pursuant to article XIV of the Treaty. We will continue to use every opportunity to call for the CTBT's prompt entry into force and universalization in all relevant international forums and to actively and persistently advocate for the signing and ratification of the CTBT in meetings with the countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, notably the annex 2 countries.

**The Acting President:** I now call on the representative of Libya, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

**Mr. Elsonni (Libya)** (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States as we commemorate the International Day against Nuclear Tests, an important day that stresses the international community's commitment to putting an end to nuclear tests because of their devastating effects on humankind and the sustained environmental damage they have done.

The Arab Group appreciates the important elements in the statements of the President, the Secretary-General, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which stressed the urgent need to rid the world of the threat posed by all nuclear weapons, which unquestionably contradict humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law more than any others and also represent the greatest threat there is to international peace and security. In that context, the Arab Group is gravely concerned about the serious risks to humankind posed by the continuing existence of nuclear weapons, which must be eliminated in a verifiable and irreversible manner, as the main guarantee for ensuring an end to their use or the threat of their use.

It will be important to ensure that the international community addresses the threats posed by certain States' continued possession of nuclear weapons and the attempts by some to continue to develop them to align with their new military doctrines, including by conducting nuclear tests. Nuclear tests present existential threats that we must continue to confront if we are to ensure that the world and future generations can be free of these weapons. The Arab Group emphasizes that the total eradication of nuclear weapons is a fully achievable goal and indeed a prerequisite

for maintaining sustained international security and stability. We believe that their continued presence, which implies the non-implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as of the relevant binding obligations adopted at the various Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including those regarding the universalization of the Treaty, constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. The Arab Group categorically rejects all claims that possession of nuclear weapons guarantees international stability or that our current circumstances are unfavourable to implementing obligations on nuclear disarmament.

We once again urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their responsibilities to implement the agreed objectives and obligations in order to fully and completely eliminate all their nuclear arsenals within specific time frames and make up for the serious and sustained damage created by the thousands of nuclear tests that they have undertaken previously.

The Arab Group once again reaffirms the importance of supporting international efforts to promote the universalization of multilateral conventions and treaties on disarming nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Nuclear States, States that have undeclared nuclear activities and programmes and parties that have not yet acceded to the NPT bear a special responsibility in that regard. The Arab Group also calls for continued international and regional efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT, which was signed more than 25 years ago.

Despite the tension and instability in the Middle East, the Arab States have shown good faith in this area by acceding to the NPT and implementing its obligations. They have also actively participated in the negotiations on the CTBT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and continue to support the efforts of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission to achieve its objectives. Nevertheless, the Middle East is one of the most salient examples of the challenges to the non-proliferation regime resulting from the fact that the NPT is still not universalized and from Israel's continued defiance of the will of the international community and its violations of relevant international resolutions as well as the norms and rules of the NPT. The Arab Group stresses the importance of stepping up efforts to address the strategic imbalance

in the Middle East region and prevent an arms race there by implementing the obligations that have been agreed on within the framework of the international disarmament mechanisms.

Foremost in that regard is the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference, in addition to Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 678 (1990) and all the subsequent relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the IAEA General Conference. In that regard, the Arab Group emphasizes the importance of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction organized at the United Nations pursuant to Assembly decision 73/546. We commend the success of the first session of the Conference, which was presided over by Jordan in November 2019 and achieved a number of important results, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/75/63). The Arab Group urges all the parties invited to the Conference to participate in it in good faith with a view to negotiating a binding treaty that will promote peace and security at the regional and international levels. We hope that the second round, to be held under Kuwait's presidency in November, will have significant results that respond to the concerns of all the relevant parties.

**Mr. Ilyassov** (Kazakhstan): Today we are commemorating the International Day against Nuclear Tests for the twelfth time. The Day is designed to draw global attention to the urgency of halting all nuclear-weapon testing and ultimately also of imposing a ban on the proliferation of nuclear warheads.

On behalf of my country, I would like to commend the President and his team, as well as High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for their tireless efforts to bring about this event. We congratulate Mr. Robert Floyd on his assumption of the post of Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and look forward to productive collaboration on the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We acknowledge the message delivered by Ms. Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York, and wish the Agency success in fulfilling its mission. I thank them all for their unfailing support



to Kazakhstan in its endeavour to achieve peace and security.

The presence here today of a large number of Member States is an indication of the international community's strong commitment to a world without nuclear tests and a future without nuclear weapons. This Day was designated and instituted with the General Assembly's unanimous adoption on 9 December 2009 of resolution 64/35, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, to mark the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site on 29 August 1991. I would therefore like to thank all who endorsed and sponsored the resolution. As the first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, mentioned in his statement, 30 years ago Kazakhstan was the first Member State of the United Nations to close its nuclear testing site, the second-largest in the world, and also to renounce the world's fourth most powerful nuclear arsenal. In an instant, my country gave up 110 ballistic missiles with 1,100 warheads capable of reaching any point on the planet and started a global anti-nuclear-weapon movement that subsequently led to the closing of test sites in Russia, the United States, France and China.

The Day also paved the way for other landmark processes and actions to reduce global nuclear threats, including the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with its advanced International Monitoring System for keeping humankind safe. It is important to ensure the CTBT's entry into force and thereby preserve its place in the international architecture supporting the quest for further reducing nuclear-weapon capabilities in the various regions of the world. We must do so to honour the millions of victims of nuclear-weapon tests and atomic bombs and never again have another Hiroshima, Nagasaki or Semipalatinsk.

The Semipalatinsk Treaty established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, the first of its kind in the northern hemisphere, flanked by the two key nuclear-weapon-possessing States. This year we will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Treaty as all five Central Asian States continue to strive to fulfil their shared desire to provide security, stability, development and peace in the region, while also addressing grave environmental concerns.

In 2015, Kazakhstan initiated the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World. A draft based on resolution 70/57,

which was first adopted in December 2015, supported by most Member States, and later reaffirmed in 2018, will be submitted again this year, and we look forward to having the support of every member of the Assembly. Another landmark event this year was the entry into force in January of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Kazakhstan believes firmly that nuclear security can be possible only if it is universal and non-discriminatory, and therefore urges all Member States to join the Treaty, which represents a new reality and makes nuclear weapons illegal.

At a time when the world is facing the formidable threats posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the spread of large-scale armed conflict and the devastation of climate change ravaging the planet, a plea for nuclear disarmament is compelling. We need confidence-building measures to eliminate conflict and instead accelerate development by harnessing advanced technologies that improve human life and at the same time eliminate the serious contradictions posed by conflict.

As a reminder of the history of my country's disarmament journey, and to show that it is possible to give up nuclear weapons, stay safe and respected and continue to pursue development, we have set up a photo exhibition near the Vienna Café, which I would like to invite representatives to visit at their convenience. It is time to overcome the threat of nuclear tests and weapons and other destructive forces and seek new horizons of progress and prosperity for all.

**The Acting President:** I have received requests for the floor from a number of other delegations for this commemorative meeting.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba endorses the statement made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The importance of this high-level meeting is even greater in the light of some States' continued modernization and expansion of their nuclear arsenals, in a context in which the millions of dollars devoted to them should be redirected to efforts to address the current global crisis, which is exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic and affects every area of human life.

We are deeply concerned about the fact that 76 years after the United States' criminal bombings of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that country, the only one that has dropped two atomic bombs and which leads the world in nuclear testing, military spending and numbers of nuclear weapons ready for use, maintains a position with a low threshold for considering the use of such weapons, even in response to so-called non-nuclear strategic threats, as well as the possibility of conducting explosive nuclear tests of the safety and effectiveness of its nuclear arsenal. The legally binding commitments that make up the disarmament and arms-control architecture must be upheld. We condemn the violations by the United States of the spirit and letter of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba, which was the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, welcomed its entry into force on 22 January, clearly establishing that nuclear weapons are not only inhumane, immoral and ethically indefensible but also illegal. We are proud to belong to the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the first region to declare itself a zone of peace. We support the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is a crucial step towards nuclear disarmament as a priority in the field of disarmament.

By ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in February, we reaffirmed our historic commitment to nuclear disarmament and a complete and effective ban on all nuclear tests, including explosive tests and those that use subcritical testing and other sophisticated methods. We support the closure and dismantling of facilities used for such purposes and their associated infrastructure. We reaffirm our belief that the only effective way to end the terrible impact of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination in a verifiable, transparent and irreversible manner. The prohibition and cessation of nuclear testing of all types is fundamental to that end.

The first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should contribute to our progress towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nuclear disarmament should be the top priority in this area. Nuclear energy should be used only for peaceful purposes and for the socioeconomic development of States, without discrimination. Nuclear weapons cannot solve the world's problems.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): We welcome the holding of this meeting of the General Assembly. We commend Kazakhstan's initiative in promoting the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for signature, demonstrating the strong determination of the international community to put an end to nuclear tests. Those sinister tests have been used as preliminary steps towards the production, proliferation and even the use of nuclear weapons. Their devastating consequences have reverberated across generations, with widespread and profound effects not only on our peoples but our planet. About 2,000 tests have been carried out since 1945, 1,054 of them by the United States. They are proof that we must take meaningful measures to achieve nuclear disarmament, as stipulated in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The international community must therefore continue to urge the nuclear-weapon States to implement their legal obligations and refrain from any activity inconsistent with them. Furthermore, the international community must not tolerate the Israeli regime's illegitimate possession of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and its blatant threats to use them. Our commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Tests should be mainly addressed to nuclear-weapon States, because it is they that possess the actual capability to conduct such tests. We continue to face an ever-increasing threat from nuclear weapons, and nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility in that regard. Given the bitter experience of the past, it is our belief that nuclear disarmament is and must remain a top priority for the international community. Humankind's very survival depends on our unwavering agreement that nuclear weapons should never be deployed and, beyond that, should be permanently destroyed. We therefore emphasize that moratoriums on nuclear tests are not a substitute for a legally binding obligation.

We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and a number of other positive developments promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We share the vision enshrined in resolution 64/35 that nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons are the

only guarantees against their use or threat of use. Let us seize any opportunity to further promote that lofty goal.

**Mr. Sautter** (Germany): I align myself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union, and would like to add the following remarks in Germany's capacity as the outgoing co-coordinator of the Article XIV process of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

More than 2,000 nuclear tests have taken place since the beginning of the nuclear age. In the early days, little consideration was given to their effects on human life. But awareness has grown incrementally, and we now know about the devastating effects that nuclear tests can have and have actually had. Indeed, nuclear testing has left its marks on the history of many countries, communities and regions of the world. The International Day against Nuclear Tests marks the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site 30 years ago. It stands for the tragic experience shared by many.

Today, we are all mindful of the consequences of nuclear testing. President Macron's decision to throw light on them and better compensate their victims is important. Putting an end to nuclear testing has become a humanitarian imperative. But it is more than that. It is a milestone whose significance cannot be overestimated, because the road to a world without nuclear weapons first passes through a world without nuclear testing. Ending nuclear testing once and for all will constrain both the proliferation and the development of nuclear weapons. It will strengthen responsibility in nuclear affairs and facilitate nuclear disarmament. Twenty-five years ago, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature. It now has 170 ratifications and 185 signatures. We commend Cuba and the Comoros for recently completing their ratifications.

Since the beginning of this millennium only North Korea has tested nuclear weapons, for which it has been categorically, consistently and rightfully condemned by the international community. Clearly, a universal norm against nuclear testing is in the making. For that process to become irreversible the CTBT must eventually enter into force, a step that is long overdue. As outgoing co-coordinator for the Article XIV process of the CTBT, Germany calls on all countries that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without preconditions or delay. We call on China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America to enable the CTBT to

finally enter into force. Pending that entry into force, I want to reiterate Germany's wholehearted support to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), an outstanding example of multilateralism in practice.

As a member of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, I would also like to stress the Initiative's commitment to strengthening both the cause of the CTBT and the work of the CTBTO. To promote nuclear education, we support all communities affected by nuclear weapons and former nuclear test sites, and we are resolved to empower the younger generation to shape our future in that regard.

In the decades-long struggle against nuclear testing the role of civil society cannot be overestimated. Physicists and physicians have played an important role in helping us to understand the effects of nuclear testing on human life. The Hibakusha, the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, remind us of the unspeakable horror that any use of nuclear weapons would cause. Think tanks and non-governmental organizations, mayors and parliamentarians have amplified the cause of ending nuclear testing. It is high time for political leaders to accomplish that mission.

**Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank President Bozkır for convening this plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests. I also commend the leadership shown by Kazakhstan and would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the statement delivered on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu. And I would especially like to congratulate Dr. Robert Floyd on his statement and on his appointment as Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. I wish him success in his duties and offer him Ecuador's continued support.

Together, hand in hand with civil society, academia, international organizations and States Members of the United Nations, we will make progress in our efforts for a world free of nuclear testing, and furthermore, free of all weapons of mass destruction. Moved by the message of the survivors of nuclear tests, I wish to recall that the best way to commemorate the victims of such tests is to ensure the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Ecuador

urges the countries that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, particularly annex 2 countries, to do so as soon as possible. Until that happens, Ecuador will insist on the need for all States to observe the moratorium on any type of nuclear testing.

I wish to highlight my region's role as the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In this regard, Ecuador aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ecuador joins the international condemnation of nuclear tests wherever they are carried out and regardless of who carries them out, not only because they contribute to the development of a weapon that has dire humanitarian consequences, which are now prohibited by a legally binding instrument, but also because these tests cause serious damage to the natural environment and have seriously affected various populations around the world. We also reiterate that subcritical and computerized testing are contrary to the spirit of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and that they permit the modernization of these weapons, even to the detriment of the commitments undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. To fulfil its commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Ecuador will continue to host infrasound and radionuclide stations in the Galapagos Islands, with a view to strengthening the international monitoring network.

Finally, we underscore the content of resolution 75/13, which we co-sponsored, and thereby express our sincere appreciation for the New York liaison mechanism between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

**Mrs. Aguiar Barboza (Brazil):** As one of the sponsors of resolution 64/35, by which the General Assembly unanimously declared 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, Brazil welcomes the holding of today's meeting and thanks both the President of the General Assembly and Kazakhstan for the initiative. I would also like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, for her statement, as well as Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and Vivian Okeke, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York. Moreover, allow me to express my deepest appreciation for the inspiring words of Sue Coleman-Haseldine, nuclear-test survivor and anti-nuclear-weapons activist, and Danity Laukon, anti-nuclear-weapons activist. May their words make us reflect on the threat posed by nuclear testing to humankind as a whole.

Brazil's commitment to banning nuclear tests goes back a long way. Twenty-five years ago, we were among the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on the same day it was opened for signing. We were also among the first countries to ratify the CTBT, in 1998. It is deeply regrettable that although more than two decades have passed, this crucial treaty has not yet entered into force.

Some argue that the adoption of the CTBT, coupled with voluntary moratoriums on nuclear tests, has led to the emergence of a *de facto* norm against nuclear testing. It is also positive that the few violations of these emerging norms that have occurred since then have been met with widespread international condemnation. However, we cannot rely on this *de facto* situation indefinitely. The prohibition of nuclear testing must become a solid and universal legally binding obligation. We call upon all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular annex 2 States, to do so without delay.

More than 2,000 nuclear-weapon tests have been carried out to date. These regrettable experiments have produced enduring indiscriminate effects on both human health and the environment; these are still being felt to this day. As we heard from our briefers previously, they will continue to affect generations to come. The growing awareness of the nefarious effects of nuclear testing reinforces the notion that the use of nuclear weapons would have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. In this regard, last January, the international community took a crucial step forward in its civilizing process with the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW is an evolutionary leap for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, significantly raising the moral barrier against the use or threat of use of such weapons. The entry into force of the Treaty is proof of States' commitment to our ultimate common objective, namely, the total elimination of nuclear weapons.



The transparent, verifiable and reversible elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to ensure that such weapons will never again be employed by anyone under any circumstances. This conviction continues to guide Brazil's unwavering commitment to both the CTBT and the TPNW.

**Mr. Bandiya** (Nigeria): On behalf of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I wish to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening today's important plenary meeting. I would also like to thank the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for his commitment to and efforts aimed at promoting the Treaty and building its verification regime.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Gabon on behalf of the Group of African States.

My delegation expresses deep regret that in the 25 years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Treaty has yet to come into force. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon States and those that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT, especially the eight remaining States mentioned in annex 2 of the Treaty, to do so without further delay. Having ratified the CTBT in September 2009, Nigeria is dedicated to the promotion of the entry into force of the Treaty and supports all efforts aimed at sustaining and generating further political momentum and the public awareness needed for its promotion and entry into force. In this regard, my delegation has shared a vision on ways to advance towards this goal within the context of non-proliferation and disarmament, in order to facilitate the attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The continuing existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to all humankind. The cost of the maintenance and modernization of these weapons is both outrageous and inexcusable when compared to the resources States can allocate for more useful and productive ventures that could further the growth and peaceful development of societies.

Nigeria underscores that it is concerned at the slow pace of progress by nuclear-weapon States in accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this regard, we stress that the universalization of the

NPT is dependent upon strict compliance with its three pillars, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

My delegation takes this opportunity to re-emphasize that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate use or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons should serve as a compelling reason for all States to address the question of their continued possession of such weapons. These weapons remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the ultimate objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations.

To that end, my delegation warmly recalls the historic entry into force of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January. My delegation remains proud to have participated actively in the process leading to the Treaty's adoption as well as being one of the first countries to sign and ratify it. Our commitment was guided by Nigeria's principled position on the denuclearization of the world. We therefore wish to urge all members of the international community, especially nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called nuclear umbrella, to seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty at an early date as well as to pursue the goal of a nuclear-free world.

Nuclear-test explosions not only introduce tensions into the global political environment but also have devastating effects on our health and on the natural environment with the spread of radioactive materials in the atmosphere. In this regard, my delegation reaffirms that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are ingredients essential for international peace and security.

In conclusion, it is on the foregoing premises that we strongly urge all global partners to make concerted efforts towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Wu Jianjun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting and for the efforts invested in its preparation despite the challenges posed by coronavirus disease. I thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mr. Robert Floyd, and the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Liaison Office in New York, Ms. Vivian Okeke, for

their statements. I also thank my colleagues and fellow delegations for their statements.

The complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons, the elimination of the threat of nuclear war and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon free world are in the common interests of humankind as a whole. As an important pillar of the international nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regimes, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been vital to the maintenance of global peace and security.

The global strategic security landscape is undergoing complex and profound shifts, and the global strategic balance and stability are being seriously challenged. The international community should work together to achieve common security and reject in no uncertain terms the cold war mentality and zero-sum games.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT. All countries should stand firm in defence of the Treaty's vital role in curbing the nuclear arms race and mitigating the risk of a nuclear war and work together to build a world of lasting peace and universal security. Nuclear-weapon States should firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the Treaty, honour their nuclear-test-moratorium commitments, make an unconditional pledge of "no first use" and refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States.

China's nuclear policy is the most consistent, continuous and predictable of all the nuclear-weapon States. China has supported the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons all along. We have stayed committed to the "no first use" policy and to our unconditional pledge not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we have consistently kept our nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for the maintenance of national security.

As one of the first countries to sign the Treaty, China has staunchly upheld the objective and purpose of the Treaty, made good on its moratorium pledge, supported the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), and has been deeply involved in the work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. In recent years, there has been significant progress in the construction, certification and acceptance of International Monitoring System

stations on its soil, which speaks volumes about China's steadfast support for the Treaty.

The twelfth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will take place in New York later this month. China looks forward to the Conference forging greater international consensus on the nuclear-test ban. China will work with the rest of the international community to contribute to the entry into force of the Treaty and continue to strive towards the ultimate goal, namely, the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): At the outset, we would like to align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We also thank the President and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their opening remarks.

As we observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests, we are reminded of the importance of ensuring that we can exist peacefully on this planet and of working to ban nuclear weapons once and for all and never allow their testing again. Today's commemoration is not a symbolic gesture. We know that the use of nuclear weapons has no worthy legacy. We must use every moment and every means available to reject the prospect of nuclear annihilation. In the end, we know that nuclear forces affect the environment in ways that are beyond our capacity to restore quickly. There is no space for miscalculation in the face of the current challenges facing us in areas such as climate change and security. We should focus our resources on those issues rather than misallocate them to an arms race. In that regard, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, there can be no justification for testing or maintaining nuclear weapons. All States must make their best efforts to move one step closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. The recent trend supporting the continued existence and even modernization of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. Considering that testing is key to the modernization of nuclear arsenals, all States must reject it, signalling their refusal of that strategy. That also applies to the nuclear-security umbrella States, which have the same responsibility to implement their commitments and foster a peaceful and safe international climate. Considering their negative effects, it is clear that there is no moral ground for possessing nuclear weapons. Furthermore, with the

entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), there are no legal grounds for the possession of such weapons, either. As one of the main proponents of the TPNW, Indonesia continues to advocate for its universal acceptance.

Secondly, the negative impact of nuclear testing must be properly addressed. Our efforts do not stop when the testing stops. The impact of nuclear tests on the environment and the human population needs to be handled and addressed, and the nuclear-weapon States should take responsibility for that. Whether a test was conducted on the mainland or in the ocean, the catastrophic effects still linger. That is particularly true for tests conducted in the Pacific Ocean, given their frequency and intensity. In that connection, the TPNW also includes specific provisions for environmental remediation and assistance to victims.

Thirdly, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is crucial. Together with other international instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the TPNW, the CTBT is an essential building block towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. As a State that has ratified the CTBT, Indonesia urges the remaining annex 2 States that have not done so to sign and ratify it.

I would like to conclude by underscoring that all nuclear-weapon testing must cease, along with the complete prohibition and elimination of such weapons. Let us make nuclear-weapon history.

**Mr. Roethlin** (Austria): I would like to thank the President for convening today's important commemorative event, as well as all the keynote speakers and briefers for their remarks.

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Andorra on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, as well as the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, both of which lay out our priorities with regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in detail.

Seventy-six years have passed since the first nuclear-weapon tests. That is a difficult milestone to commemorate. On the one hand, it reminds us that despite 76 years of efforts, the threat of nuclear weapons and their catastrophic humanitarian consequences remains ever present. Indeed, it seems to be growing. Existing disarmament agreements are being undermined;

proliferation pressures are increasing; transparency is being reduced; and nuclear arsenals are being upgraded and increased at massive costs. New types of nuclear weapons are being developed and built as more usable.

On the other hand, some notable achievements give us reason to hope. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has become an essential component of the global nuclear disarmament framework. We reiterate our full confidence in the Treaty and the CTBTO, which we commend for its tireless work to end nuclear-weapon testing. Austria is proud to host the CTBTO and its dedicated staff. We welcome its new Executive Director, Mr. Robert Floyd, and look forward to his dynamic leadership to further our common efforts. The CTBTO verifies respect for the norm against nuclear testing. The reliable, independent data provided through the International Monitoring System and the International Data Centre showcases its effectiveness. It provides an element of trust that is indispensable to building a world free of nuclear weapons. It is therefore a serious concern that yet another year has passed without its entry into force, particularly at a time when other disarmament and non-proliferation treaties are being undermined, called into question or allowed to lapse altogether. Our efforts aimed at achieving the CTBT's entry into force must not stagnate. On the contrary, it is high time that the remaining countries that are preventing the Treaty's entry into force, particularly those listed in annex 2, finally ratified the CTBT without delays or preconditions.

The overwhelming majority of countries are not content to wait for a world free of nuclear testing and nuclear weapons, as was clearly demonstrated in 2017, when 122 States voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Since then the Treaty has made staggering progress. It entered into force on 22 January and already boasts 86 signatures and 55 ratifications. Preparations are ongoing for its first meeting of States parties in Vienna in March 2022. All States and relevant organizations have been invited and we look forward to welcoming them to Vienna, whether as States parties or observers. Just as with other treaties on biological and chemical weapons, the prohibitions in the TPNW are essential to achieving the elimination of that category of weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty complements and strengthens other key elements of the global disarmament architecture, and we call on all States to engage on the concerns and motivations underlying the Treaty.

The fact is that the risk of a nuclear detonation, whether by accident, design or misunderstanding, is increasing. The humanitarian consequences of a detonation would be catastrophic. Today's weapons are larger and more destructive than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, weapons of a similar size to those used in 1945 are described as smaller and more "usable" compared to the rest of States' nuclear arsenals. It is a terrifying shift in nomenclature that is not only misleading but also risks eroding inhibitions about the use of such weapons.

At the same time, it is abundantly clear that nuclear weapons do not increase security, a view that Austria shares with the Secretary-General. Rather, global security is improved by mutual trust and transparency. Progress in disarmament and non-proliferation, including, first and foremost, the entry into force of a global norm against nuclear testing through the CTBT, is an essential step towards reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation and thereby increasing trust. I therefore reiterate Austria's commitment to the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT and call on all States to work together to achieve that end. By joining the CTBT and the TPNW, we can ensure a future in which nobody need ever again live in fear of nuclear weapons.

Before concluding, I would like to make one brief comment regarding future iterations of this commemoration. Clarity on the composition of the list of speakers is essential. While we fully respect the general format of commemorative meetings whereby the number of speakers is restricted, deviations from that practice should be duly communicated to all Member States in order to give all interested delegations an opportunity to participate and prepare accordingly.

**Mr. Vitrenko** (Ukraine): Ukraine fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

On the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, as we commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the closing in 1991 of the nuclear-weapon testing site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, we honour the memory of all victims of nuclear tests and pay tribute to those whose lives were adversely affected. We would like to take this opportunity to raise public awareness about the threat and devastating consequences of nuclear-weapon tests. From 1945 to the present day, more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been carried out

around the globe, bringing with them devastating consequences for people and the environment, as well as for social and economic development.

As we mark this International Day, and in the light of the upcoming twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we want to stress the vital importance of the Treaty's entry into force and universalization. The voluntary moratorium on explosive nuclear testing that various States have declared is important but remains insufficient, as it cannot replace a legally binding treaty. In that regard, we call on all States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay, notably the annex 2 States, whose ratification and signature are necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. The universalization and speedy entry into force of the CTBT should remain a key priority for every State, as it would significantly strengthen the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime in addition to contributing to international peace and security.

The convening of the International Conference under article XIV of the CTBT here at the United Nations later this month will be yet another opportunity to thoroughly discuss the prospects of the Treaty's entry into force. We commend the co-Chairs of the Conference for their efforts in facilitating the negotiation of the draft ministerial declaration. In order to give positive momentum to further discussions, we encourage all States to engage in meaningful dialogue to find consensus on the document.

As of today, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains the only country in the twenty-first century to conduct nuclear tests. We urge it to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to transform its declared intentions into deeds by ending nuclear testing, as well as signing and ratifying the CTBT. Only its implementation of those steps can substantiate its willingness to contribute to enhancing the existing security system both regionally and globally. Despite the fact that the CTBT has yet to enter into force, and in line with several Security Council resolutions, we urge all States to refrain from conducting any nuclear tests or any other nuclear explosions.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our strong commitment to putting an end to all nuclear tests,



whenever and wherever they might be conducted in the world.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in this commemorative meeting.

Before adjourning, I would like to say a few words. This is probably the last time that I will chair a meeting as Vice-President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. It has been a great honour for Lebanon and for me to serve as Vice-President. I would

like to thank all members for their cooperation, but most importantly, I would like to thank the Secretariat for its work, without which nothing in this Hall would happen.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 103?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*