



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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International Day against Nuclear Tests

**Statement by H.E. Ms Gillian Bird
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

Mr President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the CTBT Group of Friends: Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and my own country Australia. We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his statement today.

The very existence of this international day bears testament to the *de facto* norm against nuclear testing.

The CTBT Group of Friends is committed to achieving the CTBT's entry into force, thereby putting a legal and verifiable end to testing of nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices. The CTBT is a core element of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its entry into force will contribute to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Now having 183 signatures and 166 ratifications, the CTBT is among the world's most well-subscribed treaties.

We invite all Member States to join us at the forthcoming CTBT Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting on 27 September, where we hope to welcome news of a further ratification. Thailand's announced intention to ratify soon marks a significant regional milestone for ASEAN to celebrate, with all its members having ratified the CTBT. This sends a strong message to other regions to follow suit.

Mr President,

Pending entry into force of the CTBT, we call upon all States to maintain the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions and to refrain from any action that would undermine the Treaty's object and purpose.

In past CTBT Ministerial meetings, we have consistently condemned the six nuclear weapons tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 2006. In order to realise the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, we again urge the DPRK to comply fully with all of its international non-proliferation obligations, including relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We also call on all Members States to fully implement relevant UNSC resolutions.

We welcome recent positive developments, including the April Inter-Korean summit and the June U.S.-DPRK summit in Singapore. We note the DPRK's 20 April announcement that it would suspend nuclear and missile tests, and its May statement to the Conference on Disarmament that the DPRK would join international disarmament efforts for a total ban on nuclear tests. We further note the announced destruction of the Pyonggye-ri nuclear test site on 24 May.

We now urge the DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of priority.

Mr President,

We welcome advances made by the CTBTO in ensuring the Treaty's verification regime is robust and world-class. Almost 300 certified International Monitoring System (IMS) stations are now operating worldwide. The IMS has proven its ability to promptly and accurately detect nuclear tests.

The IMS also makes an important contribution through its scientific and civilian applications.

All States signatories must remain committed to supporting the completion and maintenance of all elements of the CTBT's verification regime and related capacity-building activities.

Mr President,

Finally, we welcome the call in the Secretary-General's Disarmament Agenda to make every effort to ensure the CTBT's early entry into force.

The vital importance of the CTBT has only increased since its opening for signature. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay, especially the remaining eight Annex 2 States¹, namely China, the DPRK, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America. We appeal to all States to make utmost efforts toward achieving entry into force of the CTBT, bringing a definitive end to nuclear testing, and taking us a step closer to our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

¹ There are eight remaining Annex 2 States, whose ratifications are necessary for entry into force: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Pakistan and United States of America.