

**Statement from Dr Robert Floyd**  
**Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**  
**UN Security Council - Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation**  
**New York, USA**  
**18 March 2024**

Madam President, Your Excellency, Foreign Minister Kamikawa

Mr Secretary General

Distinguished Council Member

It's a pleasure to engage again with the Security Council in this chamber where the world's most challenging issues are deliberated.

On 27 September 2021, I addressed this Council under Ireland's Presidency on the occasion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I return today to brief the Council on CTBTO's work since then, and I'm acutely aware that today's uncertain geopolitical context is even more complex.

It is one thing to debate the policy issues raised by weapons of mass destruction. It is quite another thing to go to Japan and visit Hiroshima. To see for yourself one of the two places on Earth where a nuclear bomb was dropped in war. I was there last August. Back on a calm, summer morning - 6 August 1945 - a little boy, three years old, is happily riding his tricycle. A nuclear bomb explodes 600 meters above Hiroshima. The largest almost instantaneous obliteration of human life ever seen on Earth. Visiting the Peace Memorial Museum now, you see photos of those affected. You see things found afterwards. Things you can't forget. That tiny, charred tricycle. Found a kilometre away from the centre of the blast.

Between 1945 and 1996 - when the CTBT was opened for signature - over 2,000 nuclear tests were conducted. Most of them far bigger than the bomb that devastated Hiroshima. That bomb had a blast equivalent to 15,000 tonnes of TNT. But the largest bomb ever tested... Imagine a huge cube of TNT. 50 million tonnes. A cube 300 metres wide, and 300 metres deep, and 300 metres tall -- About the height of the Chrysler Building. 50 million tonnes of TNT! All that power - to destroy.

What changed? The world decided. Enough was enough. The CTBT was agreed in 1996. A transformation for the better! Why such a success? Above all, because the Treaty is fair and transparent. The Treaty prescribes a global network of 337 monitoring facilities. They'll detect any significant explosion anywhere on Earth, almost immediately. They monitor seismic activity. Soundwaves in the oceans. Soundwaves in the atmosphere. Radioactive particles in the air. Their data streams to the CTBTO in Vienna, around the clock. That data isn't secret. It's available to all CTBT States Signatories, including all of the current Security Council members. And the network is growing.

Since my last briefing to the Council, we've certified four more stations. That brings the total number of facilities to 306. Two major national networks have been completed. Both Argentina and the Russian Federation now have established all required facilities within their territory. Including stations in some of the world's most extreme environments. We're closing in on our target. But that is not all. Since I last briefed the Council, CTBTO's National Data Centres-for-All (NDCs4All) initiative was established. It's had an excellent response from States. CTBTO is working with more and more States to set up their own National Data Centres. To allow even the smallest of States to access all that data.

This fair, transparent Treaty is a success that everyone can understand! That is why support for the Treaty grows and grows. In 2021, I told you that 185 States had signed the Treaty. Now 187 States have signed the Treaty. In 2021 I told you that 170 States had ratified the Treaty. As of today, 178 States have ratified it. Yes, there was one high-profile de-ratification last year. One step backwards. But nine steps forward. The trend is clear and strong. In fact, on Wednesday last week one more country ratified the CTBT, proudly declaring its commitment to a world free from nuclear tests. That new ratification by Papua New Guinea is worth celebrating. I thank the government of Papua New Guinea for their valuable contribution to international peace and security. It sustains momentum towards universalisation.

Something else has changed since 2021. There's a sense of unease and uncertainty, prompted by new wars and conflicts. Nuclear weapons are back in the public consciousness. Not only thanks to the Oscar-winning *Oppenheimer* film! There are concerns that one state is accumulating worrying levels of highly enriched uranium. Reports of increased activity at former nuclear test sites in a number of states. Suggestions that some states might even be considering the use of nuclear weapon.

In uncertain times, the best response is a lot more certainty. Our verification system detects any nuclear explosion. Anywhere on earth. Anytime. However, the Treaty envisions more verification tools. Tools to further boost transparency. To provide that certainty. To build trust. To dispel any suspicion or allegation about a state testing in secret. So that the world's decision-makers, like yourselves, have the facts.

The Treaty outlines four verification tools:

The International Monitoring System, now 90 percent complete

Consultation and clarification

Confidence-building mechanisms

And importantly On-Site Inspection.

That last one - On-Site Inspection – is the Treaty's crucial practical tool to complement the International Monitoring System. It confirms beyond any doubt that an explosion is - or is not - a nuclear explosion. Certainty through transparency. But until the Treaty enters into force, we can't get that certainty through transparency. A lot has changed since I was last here in 2021. But one thing hasn't changed. The case for the CTBT's entry into force. What if we here today agree that the world needs more certainty and trust? So that we never again see a nuclear weapon's indiscriminate destruction? What if we all call for the CTBT to enter into force? What if there's the shared political leadership to push this over the line? That's a world with a lot more security. Maybe even more peace.

Thank you.