



**Remarks**

**by**

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**Vice-President**

**on behalf of**

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe**

**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**Informal Meeting of the GA to mark the Observance of the  
International Day against Nuclear Tests**

**New York**

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*Please check against delivery*

Excellencies,  
Secretary-General,  
H.E. Yermek Kosherbayev, the First Deputy of the Governor of Eastern Kazakhstan,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I warmly welcome you to this informal gathering of the UN General Assembly to observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Our discussions will allow us to build public awareness and education about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, and to highlight the need for their cessation for the wellbeing of all humankind.

At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to the Republic of Kazakhstan represented by H.E. Yermek Kosherbayev, the First Deputy of the Governor of Eastern Kazakhstan, who hails from the Semipalatinsk region; and his Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative. Their tireless efforts ensure that this international day plays an integral part in the General Assembly's agenda.

I would also like to recognize Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his strong support in ridding what he has called our "over-armed world" of nuclear weapons.

Excellencies,

Our collective aspiration for a world free of nuclear weapons must be reflected in a firm and formal commitment to ban nuclear tests. To test such weapons is to play with proverbial fire, takes us further down the treacherous path we seek to avoid and damages both human health and the environment.

In recent decades, we have seen extensive international efforts aimed at banning nuclear test-explosions, which have had positive and highly influential results. Most noteworthy of these is

the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT upholds the international norm against nuclear testing and although not yet entered into force, represents a culmination of efforts to date.

With the completion of a significant portion of the Treaty's global verification infrastructure, we have seen the establishment of a verification regime, which continues to empower signatory States by providing them with advanced technical capabilities to analyze data obtained from verification stations across the globe. With such capabilities, signatories to the CTBT are able to detect, in a timely and effective manner, any nuclear test explosions, wherever they occur on the planet. This has created a powerful deterrence effect, which has kept a tight lid on nuclear testing for over a decade, with few known exceptions.

The peaceful application of verification technologies also represents a valuable facet of this important system, and includes technologies that can detect earthquakes, volcano activity and radioactive emissions, contributing to disaster warning and mitigation efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our achievements have brought us closer to a universally effective legally binding comprehensive nuclear-test ban; however, as long as the treaty has not entered into force, its effectiveness remains limited. I urge you all to strengthen efforts in this regard and show necessary political commitment to finish business and bring the CTBT into force.

As we proceed today, it is important to place discussions around nuclear weapons inside the larger context of the work of the United Nations. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, produced an outcome document entitled "The Future We Want." This document set a number of processes in motion for the elaboration of a development agenda for the post-2015 era. Work to define this agenda is now well underway and tomorrow, I will convene a High-level Stocktaking Event to reflect upon the various post-2015 development-related processes that have taken place during the current session of the General Assembly.

As we begin this critical and aspirational process of mapping out the “the future we want,” we can all concur that there is no place for nuclear weapons in such a world. With their massive powers for destruction, the use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic global consequences and would cause severe and long-lasting emergencies – humanitarian, global health, climate, social order, human development, and economic.

Development goals can only be achieved if we prevent such catastrophes on our planet; and accessing social goods and services is predicated on the existence of peace and security. This must be a collective effort, because we face the risks posed by these weapons collectively, as a human family, not as States with narrow national security interests.

Excellencies,

In proposing the initial draft of the General Assembly consensus Resolution 64/35, Kazakhstan provided a positive example of collective action that ultimately led the General Assembly to establish 29 August of each year as an International Day against Nuclear Tests. Kazakhstan also unilaterally closed down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site more than a decade earlier and I commend them for this leadership.

I also appreciate their continued efforts to lead the international celebration of this Day, including organizing the high-level panel within the framework of today’s meeting. No doubt, the extensive and varied experiences of the panel members will enrich today’s discussions and help advance our thinking on the way forward. As emphasized by General Assembly Resolution 64/35, I would also like to commend the active engagement and essential role of civil society, academia and mass media who support our global cause in nuclear disarmament and I likewise look forward to their contributions during today’s meeting.

To conclude, let me recall that the promotion of peace and security is among the main purposes and principles of the United Nations. As agreed in General Assembly Resolution 64/35, every effort should be made to end nuclear tests. In the future we want, the future we deserve, there is

no space for nuclear weapons and the wellbeing and health of people and the environment come first.

Thank you.

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