

10 September 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the 2015 Observance of International Day Against Nuclear Tests**

**Excellencies,  
H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General  
Distinguished delegates and panellists,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to address this meeting of the General Assembly as we observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests. I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for its leadership on this issue and the Permanent Mission for co-organizing this commemorative event.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the first nuclear weapon test, carried out in New Mexico in July 1945. In the months following that test, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution, calling for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

In 2009, the General Assembly went on to adopt resolution 64/35, declaring 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Since then, this day has been devoted to important reflections on the effects of nuclear weapons tests and explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving a nuclear weapons-free world.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

Nuclear tests and weapons constitute an existential threat to humanity and contradict some of the fundamental principles of the United Nations.

Nuclear testing and explosions have been carried out underground, underwater and in the air, with profoundly negative, long-term consequences. The fallout from nuclear tests has resulted in disease, the contamination of elements of the food chain and water supplies as well as the destruction of ecosystems.

In spite of the grave impacts of nuclear testing on human lives, the environment and international peace and security, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), opened for signature nearly 19 years ago and ratified by 164 States to date, has still not entered into force.

In its current session, the General Assembly reiterated its firm commitment to the Treaty. I would like to use this occasion to stress the importance and urgency of realizing the CTBT's entry into force without further delay.

The 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) highlighted the stark reality of the increasing divisions between the States parties over the future of nuclear disarmament. We should seek to bridge those gaps and work together to ensure that the NPT can continue to serve as a vital element of global security.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

Today's commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Tests provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness around the world about this critical issue. Indeed, education can play a key role in building mutual understanding, promoting peace, and advocating for disarmament.

We should also make use of this occasion to engage with civil society, the media and academia to identify opportunities to work together towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

I hope the wide range of expertise that will be shared by today's panel members will serve to enrich our broader discussions and advance our thoughts on the way forward.

I encourage Member States, in collaboration with civil society, academia and the media, to intensify efforts towards ending nuclear weapons testing and achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.