



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 August 2016

Excellency,

I wish to make a reference to my letter dated 31 May 2016 in which I informed you of my intention to convene an informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 31 August 2016 from 10:00 to 13:00, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

The informal plenary meeting to mark the Day will include a high-level panel discussion on the theme "Strengthening the global norm against nuclear tests – CTBT@20". A copy of the programme of the event and an information note are herewith attached.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

International Day against Nuclear Tests
“Strengthening the global norm against nuclear tests – CTBT@20”

Information Note

General Assembly, in its resolution 64/35, declared the 29th of August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. In this regard, the President of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft, will convene an informal plenary meeting on Wednesday, 31 August 2016, from 10:00 to 13:00, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber to mark the observance of this Day.

Background:

Although most of more than 2000 nuclear explosions for military or for peaceful purposes took place in the last century, the harmful effects on the lives and health of people and the environment are still present today. Bringing an irreversible end to nuclear explosions will prevent the further development of nuclear weapons, which pose a grave threat to humanity.

Closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapon test site in Kazakhstan, one of the largest nuclear weapon test sites in the world, 25 years ago created an opportunity to move ahead for those advocates who, for decades, had promoted a comprehensive ban on all nuclear testing.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), opened for signature in 1996, for 20 years has been and continues to be the main mechanism for eradicating nuclear weapons testing. Even though it has yet to enter into force, the CTBT helps to prevent nuclear explosions, create an effective barrier to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and limit the risks of acquiring of nuclear weapons by non-state actors. It is an important tool in the endeavor to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Despite all the efforts of the international community, nuclear testing is still not history. Breaking the globally respected de-facto moratorium on nuclear testing poses a threat to international peace and security. A final push for its entry into force with genuine engagement of all Annex II countries is needed more than ever.

Objectives:

- Draw attention to the dangers of nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and their harmful effects are on the lives and health of people and the environment;
- Underline that the end of nuclear tests is one of the key means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world;
- Explain the need to strengthen the global norm against nuclear tests by renewing a call on states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify CTBT to enable its entry into force;
- Promote the universality of the CTBT and explore means for overcoming the current impasse.

Format:

The President of the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations will deliver opening remarks before a moderated panel discussion. Panelists will reflect on the progress made to date, current and emerging challenges, and opportunities to strengthen the global norm against nuclear tests. Member States and observers will have the opportunity to ask questions and comments from the floor (max 5 min). There will be no pre-determined list of speakers and Member States are encouraged to pose questions and comments in an interactive manner. The Informal Meeting is open to think-tanks, the academic community, civil society and the media and it will be webcasted.

**Informal meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
to mark the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests**

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN
Provisional programme

Wednesday, 31 August 2016	
10:00	<p><u>Opening segment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly • Message on behalf of the Secretary General delivered by Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs • H.E. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations
10:30	<p><u>Panel discussion</u></p> <p>“Strengthening the global norm against nuclear tests – CTBT@20”</p> <p>Moderator: H.E. Cristian Istrate, Chair of the CTBT Prep Com, Vienna</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs • Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary, Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization • H.E. Amatlain Elizabeth Kabua, Permanent Representative of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations • H.E. Laura Elena Flores Herrera, Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations • Mr. Randy Rydell, Mayors for Peace
11:30	Observations and remarks by Member States
13:00	Closing of the meeting