04 August 2017

Excellency,

Resolution 64/35 adopted in 2009 declared 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that I will convene an informal meeting of the General Assembly to mark the observance of this day.

In line with the abovementioned resolution, this meeting is aimed to enhance public awareness and education about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free-world.

The informal plenary meeting will take place on 30 August from 3:00 to 6:00 pm in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. It will consist of an opening segment and plenary debate. An information note is attached.

For additional details, please contact Special Advisor, H.E. Mr. Ioannis Vrailas (vrailas@un.org) or Senior Advisor, Mr. Danny Rahdiansyah (rahdiansyah@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Peter Thomson

To All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York
Informal Meeting of the General Assembly
to mark the observance of International Day against Nuclear Tests,
Trusteeship Council Chamber, 30 August 2017, 3-6 pm

Information Note

Background:

Over the past seventy years, nuclear weapons have been tested on more than 2,000 occasions – in the atmosphere, underground and underwater. The toll on human life, and consequent death and destruction, as well as environmental contamination through radiation has been staggering. Decades after nuclear tests, many affected territories around the world remain hazardous and unfit for human habitation, agriculture or economic development.

Convinced that every effort should be made to end nuclear tests, the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests through the unanimous adoption of its resolution 64/35 on 2 December 2009.

In keeping with this commitment, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Peter Thomson, will convene a half-day meeting to mark the observance of this International Day, on 30 August at UN Headquarters, New York.

Relevance of the issue:

Despite various international legal instruments and mechanisms, the possibility of a nuclear test has not been reduced to zero. The threat is not only real but continues to grow, especially with deteriorating international security environment along with increased military spending and a strategic tilt towards nuclear weapons. Expansion of the “nuclear club” will only worsen the global security situation. Testing is indispensable for developing new nuclear weapons and improving existing stockpiles. A strong message opposing further nuclear tests is needed.

Along with long-standing challenges such as the non-entry into force of the CTBT, continued increases in spending on nuclear weapons, and the threat of nuclear terrorism, the international community faces new risks in terms of the evolving nature of risks of WMD proliferation due to rapid advances in science and technology. This necessitates more than ever the complete ban on nuclear testing and progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

It is the hope of the international community that one day all nuclear weapons will be eliminated. Until then, there is a need to end nuclear tests as we work towards promoting peace and security world-wide. Initiatives such as the International Day against Nuclear Tests are part of the global efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The focus of the meeting:

The endeavor of this Informal Meeting is not just to take stock of national and international efforts against nuclear testing, but also to encourage a productive and thought provoking
discussion on challenges and potential solutions. The purpose of the meeting is for Member States to reflect on the kind of action that can be taken to end nuclear weapons testing. What are the concrete ways to move forward in the face of impasses? What are the challenges facing the global norm against nuclear testing and possible ideas to further strengthen this norm? How can States, together with civil society, spread awareness about the dangers associated with testing?

**Format:**

The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General will deliver opening remarks, followed by a plenary debate. Member States are expected to speak for no more than three minutes. There will be no pre-determined speakers list and delegations will speak from the floor.

Member States are invited to participate at the highest possible level. The meeting is also open to UN agencies, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the media.

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