Excellencies
Distinguished delegates.
Executive Secretary Zerbo

Thank you for the invitation to speak today in my capacity as President-designate of the Tenth Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I look forward to contributing to the excellent discussions related to this long-overdue disarmament and non-proliferation goal.

As multilateral treaties dedicated to the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons, the NPT and the CTBT are vital organs in the body that is the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The two treaties share the same objectives of constraining both the so-called “horizontal” and “vertical” proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Along with the norm against the use of nuclear weapons, the norms against their proliferation and testing are two of the most important achievements of the nuclear era. The failure to codify the norm against testing into legally binding effect remains some of the post-Cold War period’s most important unfinished business.

And these norms can never be taken for granted.

Envisaged as separate “building blocks” of the international regime, the CTBT and the NPT have now been linked for over fifty years.

Although the attempt by some delegates in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee to have the CTBT included in the NPT was unsuccessful, the latter’s preamble does seek the “discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time”. Of course, Article V is now interpreted in light of the CTBT and as an effective brake on the qualitative
and quantitative improvement of nuclear weapons, and its entry into force is almost universally perceived as one of the most important “effective measures” under Article VI.

The symbiosis between these pillars of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime has only deepened with the NPT’s indefinite extension. You will recall that Decision 2 of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, prioritized the negotiation of the CTBT by 1996.

The CTBT has been an important element of every Review Conference outcome since then, as States Parties have rightly recognized the importance of an in force CTBT to the goals of the NPT.

Of the thirteen practical steps in nuclear disarmament agreed by the 2000 Review Conference, the very first stresses “The importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without condition . . . to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.”

And the 64-point action plan from the 2010 Review Conference contained no less than five actions related to nuclear testing and the CTBT, including its entry into force.

These outcomes from the near universal membership of the NPT are commitments that help reinforce the excellent work done by the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO and the Provisional Technical Secretariat to bolster membership of the CTBT and accelerate its entry into force.

The determination of NPT States Parties to act on these commitments can be seen in the support for resolutions at the First Committee of the General Assembly, through the membership of dedicated groups such as the Friends of the CTBT and in cross-regional groupings dedicated to the implementation of the NPT such as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Stockholm Initiative, whose recommendations both include urgent calls for the CTBT’s entry into force.
One of the opportunities presented by the postponement of the Tenth NPT Review Conference has been the ability to conduct expanded and enhanced consultations with States Parties across all three pillars of the NPT with representatives in Geneva, New York and Vienna. It is perhaps not surprising that the entry into force of the CTBT is a common issue in all three cities and across all three of the NPT’s regional groups.

This speaks to its importance in the context of the NPT’s implementation.

Events in 2020 reinforced for many that, while moratoria on nuclear testing are valuable confidence-building measures, they cannot substitute for a legally-binding, verifiable ban on nuclear testing. That is, an in force CTBT – one that is fully empowered to undertake activities such as onsite inspections.

Based on my consultations with the NPT regional groups, I expect these concerns to be raised at the Review Conference and I expect that many States Parties will push for a call for the CTBT’s entry into force in any outcome document. I also expect them to seek recognition and validation of the International Monitoring System and of the outstanding capacity-building work undertaken by the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

As in the past, States Parties will likely look to support the sustainability of the CTBTO and the Provisional Technical Secretariat – both in terms of human and financial resources.

In the context of nuclear disarmament verification, I expect that States Parties will want to praise the leadership of the CTBTO in this field, including for its ground-breaking use of advanced technology for this purpose.

If the Review Conference can agree on a consensus outcome, this support will lend political and even moral impetus to the entry into force of the CTBT. It will place binding commitments on States Parties to make good on that support.
One consistent theme throughout my consultations has been whether and how to hold States Parties accountable for implementation of commitments made at Review Conferences. Some suggestions have included concrete benchmarks or compulsory reporting on implementation. Obviously, this applies to commitments across all three of the NPT's pillars, but it is relevant to the CTBT. It is one of the important questions States Parties will have to consider next August.

Nuclear testing has been an enduring stain on the international community. In addition to the security risks posed by testing and its implications for proliferation and the prospects of nuclear war, its impact on human health and the environment has been devastating. The NPT has played a strong role in the efforts to wipe away that stain, and I hope that States Parties will continue that support at the Tenth Review Conference.

Thank you.