

Time to translate nuclear test moratorium into legally binding obligation – UN chief

20 September 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today expressed the readiness of the United Nations to help bring into force the global treaty banning nuclear tests, adopted more than 20 years ago, while noting that the “destabilizing and provocative” actions by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) seek to undermine the global norm against nuclear explosions.

“If there is something I take very seriously it is the fact that, as Secretary-General, I am the depository of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT),” said Mr. Guterres in his [remarks](#) to a biennial conference on facilitating the Treaty’s entry into force, held at UN Headquarters in New York.

“A CTBT that is in force would be a milestone on the road to a world free of nuclear weapons. It has the potential to prevent a nuclear arms race and an escalation of regional and bilateral tensions,” he added.

Since its adoption in 1996, 183 States have signed the Treaty and 166 States have ratified it.

However, for the Treaty to enter into force, it must be ratified by all the 44 States that formally participated in the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament and possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time.

If we want to eliminate the risk of nuclear attacks, we need to stop nuclear testing. If we want to stop nuclear testing, we need a legally binding instrument.

Of the 44 States, China, Iran, United States, Egypt and Israel have signed the treaty but not yet ratified it. DPRK, India and Pakistan have not signed it.

Mr. Guterres noted that for almost 20 years, with the sole exception of the DPRK, all countries possessing nuclear weapons have helped to create a global culture against nuclear testing through their voluntary unilateral moratoria.

“Sadly and dangerously, the destabilizing and provocative actions by the DPRK seek to undermine this norm – and along with it, global stability,” he said, reiterating that it is time to translate this shared norm into a legally binding obligation.

Also addressing the meeting, General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák [said](#) that when the CTBT enters into force, a complete halt to all nuclear testing will be in even clearer sight.

"Make no mistake: we need this Treaty," he stated.

"If we want to eliminate the risk of nuclear attacks, we need to stop nuclear testing. If we want to stop nuclear testing, we need a legally binding instrument. And if we want an instrument, we need political will to achieve it."