

**Statement by Dr Lassina Zerbo,  
Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the  
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

**Handover Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter**

*24 February 2017*

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Mr Chairman,  
Ambassador Maruta,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate Ambassador Najafi on his new responsibilities, and thank Ambassador Maruta for his kind invitation to attend this year's handover ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter.

The Group of 77 was created over five decades ago to foster cooperation and multilateralism towards a more prosperous and safer, more secure, world. The CTBTO shares these ideals.

By banning nuclear test explosions, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty makes an immeasurable contribution to peace, security and human health – and thus to the conditions that are necessary to promote cooperation and prosperity.

Moreover, through the civil and scientific applications of its verification technologies, the Treaty also contributes in very tangible ways to development and human well-being, including in the context of the UN sustainable development goals.

Decades of diplomatic effort and technical advancements have given us a near-universal treaty with a clear mandate and sound objectives; a verification system fully capable of fulfilling its purpose of detecting nuclear test explosions by anyone, anywhere; and an integrated capacity-building and training structure that helps each and every State make full use of the data collected by the most extensive monitoring system ever created.

But these benefits cannot be reaped without the resolve and continuous support of the international community, and I am confident that the Group of 77 will

continue to exercise its leadership towards entry into force of the CTBT as the next step towards achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reiterate the continued readiness of the CTBTO to further deepen the partnership with the Group of 77. I thank Ambassador Maruta for having dedicated himself to his office with such distinction, and look forward to working with Ambassador Najafi to continue developing the fruitful and cordial relations that have always existed between the Group of 77 and the CTBTO.

Thank you.