

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

**G77 Handover Ceremony
22 January 2014**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation to Director General Li of UNIDO for the role his Organization plays in hosting the G77 Vienna Chapter.

It is an honour for me to participate in the handover ceremony for the first time as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Last year you were kind enough to extend the invitation to both me and Mr. Tóth to welcome His Excellency Ambassador Elamin of Sudan as new chair of the G77 Vienna Chapter. We greatly appreciated this as a mark of your support for a smooth transition in the senior management of the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

As the first Executive Secretary from a G77 country, I am all too aware of the shared concerns that brought this group together in 1964. While much progress has been made over the years in terms of achieving greater shared prosperity and a safer, more secure, world, many of those concerns remain just as relevant fifty years on.

Although not a humanitarian or development agency, CTBTO's verification system and data products have proven to have civil and scientific applications that can assist countries in areas such as disaster risk reduction and environmental monitoring. This, combined with my determination to better integrate the capacity-building services we provide to G77 countries, has enhanced the role the PTS can play in strengthening national institutions and know-how.

Indeed, at its very base, the CTBT itself is a key enabler for development. I know that your colleagues in capitals, in New York and elsewhere, are currently tasked with re-framing the global development agenda beyond 2015. There has been discussion about a holistic approach to sustainable development across its various dimensions, underpinned by stronger linkages to peace and security. Whatever governments decide when formal negotiations get underway later this year, I wish to assure you that under my leadership the Provisional Technical Secretariat will do what it can within the Commission's mandate to support those decisions.

This is an opportune time for deepening the partnership between the G77 and CTBTO that was nurtured by Ambassador Elamin over the past year. With a long-standing interest in the Treaty, His Excellency Ambassador Azeez is also currently chair of Working Group A. I have no doubt that, while exercising these two chairmanship roles in a clear and distinct manner, Ambassador Azeez will ensure that those synergies that can usefully be exploited will be.

In this connection, please be assured that my staff and I undertake to listen very carefully to all points raised by the G77 and its members through the meetings of our Policymaking Organs and stand ready to work with you in a positive spirit and open manner.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Not only is it fifty years since the emergence of the G77 as a force in global cooperation, It is also just over fifty years since the Partial Test-Ban-Treaty entered into force, an important milestone in the journey towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. This journey may not yet be at an end, but the CTBTO is operational and ready. The Integrated Field Exercise to be held in Jordan this year will demonstrate this readiness more clearly than ever.

I wish you all a Happy New Year and look forward to ever-closer collaboration in 2014. Thank you.