



KAZAKHSTAN

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Statement by

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at the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly

on Nuclear Disarmament

New York

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate His Excellency, Mr. John Ashe for his election as President of the 68th session of the General Assembly, and for convening this High Level Meeting (HLM) on Nuclear Disarmament at a time when nuclear weapons development and modernization still persist, in the face of progressive erosion of global security. We also thank the Secretary-General for cautioning us on the perils that beset the world with new emerging trends that could derail us from achieving nuclear abolition.

This High Level Meeting today is questioning critically the purported security and deterrence value of nuclear weapons and their legitimacy in military, political and security doctrines. Kazakhstan would like to voice some clear messages which we feel entitled to convey, having closed down the second largest nuclear test site, and renounced the fourth largest arsenal in the world in 1991, and now living in peace for the last twenty years.

When the detonation of even one nuclear weapon can cause incomprehensible destruction, the present number of over 17,000 warheads is unacceptable. Today, the immorality of developing, modernizing and using nuclear weapons is gaining attention in all international fora as a violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, because of the horrific consequences that these deadly weapons can inflict on human existence and life on earth. Kazakhstan can truly testify to this. About 1.5 million people of my country have tragically suffered the consequences of the devastating effects of some 468 nuclear explosions over a span of 40 years. In addition, the cost of maintaining and developing such arsenals worldwide seems unconscionable when the same resources can be invested in human advancement and sustainable development. We thank Norway for further bringing to light these humanitarian issues at the March 2013 Oslo Conference. We hope to continue this positive trend at a similar deliberation in Mexico next year.

Despite its asymmetry, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the "cornerstone" of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore call for universalizing the NPT, with timely action between now and the 2015 NPT Review Conference, in order to demonstrate tangible results with subcommittees working in parallel on various action points of the Outcome Document. This should be done in harmony with the Secretary-General's Five-Point Plan and the various initiatives launched by groups of countries.

Notwithstanding the number of positive steps taken by the Russian Federation and the United State of America in the past on START-III, little progress has been made. It is evident that the national security of a few makes the security of the entire world precarious. Global nuclear disarmament should also include dismantling strategic nuclear

forces and their carriers, as well as, the technologies developed by increasing numbers of countries.

Compliance to nuclear abolition should be adhered to not only by State Parties of the NPT, but also by States that are not party to the Treaty. We acknowledge that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing, and are linked to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, the HLM is particularly significant as it focuses on nuclear disarmament. The history of the arms race has proved that as long as some Member States have weapons, others will want them, thus leading to greater proliferation by state and non-state actors.

The main criterion of commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world is the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by Annex II countries. The international community looks forward, in particular, to the ratification of the Treaty by the US Senate, as announced by President Obama in Prague in 2009. Without it, some countries will continue to refrain from signing and ratifying the CTBT.

We need to move forward in establishing a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Paradoxically, perhaps this time of volatility and change in the region can create new opportunities. We hope that the long-awaited conference on this subject can take place by the end of 2013 and my government stands ready to host meetings in Kazakhstan in support of this process. This could contribute to peace and stability in the region, and bring us closer to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In my own region, the Treaty establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in Central Asia (CANWFZ) has contributed to international and regional security. We look forward to the fruitful rapprochement with the Nuclear Weapons States on signing the protocol on negative assurances.

While most Member States would like to see negotiations take place within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for new legally binding instruments, such as a treaty banning the production of fissile material for military purposes (FMCT), and the convention outlawing nuclear weapons, great political will must be exercised to overcome the impasse of the last decade in the CD. At the same time, we recognize the transparent, inclusive and comprehensive process of the Open-Ended Working Group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

At the Global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, in April of 2010, our President called for a Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World as the first step towards a Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The draft will shortly be circulated and we hope that Member States will support it unanimously, so that gradually we can move towards the aspirations expressed

at this HLM. Nuclear weapons cannot be an exception, when all other WMDs have their own binding legal instruments.

Finally, the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 64/35, designating 29 August (the day the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was shut down in 1991) as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, is Kazakhstan's contribution to the abolition of nuclear tests as a means to a world free of nuclear weapons. The Day creates public awareness worldwide to harness enlightened public advocacy and diplomacy to make political leaders accountable to their commitments. The Government of Kazakhstan has also initiated the ATOM (Abolish Testing. Our Mission) Project as an e-campaign with the similar purpose of mobilizing people worldwide to press for a ban on nuclear weapons. I encourage you to visit its website (www.atomproject.org) to add your voice to the thousands who have spoken out.

Kazakhstan is committed to work resolutely with all other Member States and I am confident that the HLM will define our common approach for strengthening the process of nuclear disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. President.