

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



AFRICA DAY CELEBRATION

**Statement by CTBTO Executive Secretary
Lassina Zerbo**

THE CTBTO's PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN AFRICA

1. I wish to express my appreciation to the Africa Group and its Chairperson for the invitation to this important commemoration. As an African, I attach great importance to this event which celebrates African Unity.
2. I also congratulate the Group for the relevance of the theme “The United Nations Programmes and Projects in Africa; The Journey so far and what next” in the run-up of the United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda (25-27 September 2015) and with regard to primary aims of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).
3. Africa has become the continent that polarizes most of world actors –international organizations as well as individual countries, political leaders and businesspeople alike, academia, civil society groups and philanthropists. The reasons behind this growing interest for the African continent are well known to all of us here today: statistics on the continent are both puzzling and fascinating: acute poverty stands alongside immense mineral wealth; buoyant services sector (ITC, banking, etc.) despite high illiteracy rates; hunger and malnutrition despite vast arable lands; ... But the good news is that Africa’s growth rate is expected to average 7 percent per annum for the next 20 years.
4. The list can go on and on...because as passionate Africans and strong believers in multilateralism, we can spend hours and hours discussing about the continent. But, I understand that what you want to hear today is what the Organization that I head, the CTBTO, has been doing in Africa and what we intend to do in the future.
5. Unlike other Vienna-based Organizations, the CTBTO does not have a purely “development mandate”. The primary mandate of the Organization is make sure that no nuclear test goes undetected and, thus, contribute to international peace and security.
6. Instead the CTBT should rather be seen as a development enabler. We build the capacities of Member States by providing our constituents with means, knowledge and opportunities, so that their respective countries can fully play their role on the international stage.
7. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is unprecedented because of its uniquely democratic nature – giving to all Member States equal access to our data and products. It is a known fact that there are inequalities in the technological field among countries. As the CTBT is supported by a solid scientific and technological base, such inequalities could have weakened developing countries’ full participation in the Treaty’s verification regime.
8. We have therefore taken on to put all of our Member States on equal footing, through a set of capacity-building programmes aimed at strengthening the ability of Member States to fulfil their commitments under the CTBT and enable them to fully benefit from their participation in the CTBT regime. In other words, we are providing them with the necessary tools to make informed decisions.

9. Furthermore, with the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty (establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa) which is complementary with the CTBT, African countries can resort to our data and products to ensure compliance with the Pelindaba Treaty.
10. Let me also stress that, beyond their verification-related dimension, the data and products that we are providing to our Member States also offer a wide range of potential civil and scientific applications. For instance:
 - seismic data can be used to assess seismic hazards to improve civil engineering or design disaster-management plans; studies on earth structure and tectonics;
 - infrasound data can help monitor natural hazards (including volcanic activity and storm tracking) or study climate evolution;
 - hydroacoustic data find potential applications in tsunami warning, marine mammal population estimation and behaviour study and climate observation; and
 - radionuclide data can be used to analyze environmental samples and thus provide crucial warning of increased levels of radioactivity.
11. In this regard, I want to share with you the story that a staff working at an NDC told me the other day. He candidly explained to me that he was very sceptical when he was sent to attend one of our training programmes because he did not see the relevance of banning nuclear testing for his institution. But now, he went on, he uses our data and products to fight illegal dynamite fishing. I do not need to tell you how devastating this can be for the fishing industry and marine environment in many African countries. This is just one example, out of many, of how the training that the CTBTO offers can be used non-verification-related purposes.
12. At this stage, the natural question that comes to one's mind is to know what the results of our Capacity-Building Programmes are. Well, the figures speak for themselves:
 - As of today, we have provided assistance to 33 African countries in establishing functional NDCs. Such assistance included provision of training for nationals, hardware and software – all free of charge;
 - In total, 840 African scientists and technicians have been trained in our various technical and scientific training programmes, and further 615 have attended (both *in situ* and online) our Diplomacy & Public Policy Courses.
13. For the future, our goals are clear. Further to increasing and enhancing our Capacity-Building Programmes, we are also pursuing to build a strong strategic partnership with the African Union through its Commission and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE). We are planning to organize a number of key events (such as a Regional Conference and a major On-Site-Inspection Training Exercise) in Africa in the months ahead. In these endeavours, we hope to continue benefiting from the support of all African countries, in particular of the diplomatic representations based in Vienna.

14. To close, I would like to share some things to ponder about. Celebrations and anniversaries are always good opportunities to take a step back and take stock of one's achievements and setbacks in order to chart out a better course for the future. As such, we should today's gathering to remind ourselves that the very idea of a continental organization was also a dream of a better Africa for all Africans, a blueprint of an Africa that will be a leading global player in the economic, cultural, and peace and security fields – in a word, an Africa that will regain its pride and dignity after five centuries¹ of slave trade and colonial rule. This was also the idea behind the transformation of the OAU into the African Union.
15. The questions are: How much progress have we done towards those goals? What is still standing between that dream and us? How can we make it come true? Are we still focused on that dream? Are we still living Kwame Nkrumah's dream of the *Pax Africana*; that is African solutions to Africa's challenges? In other words, we have to assume our responsibilities. With 54 African States, Africa accounts for more than a quarter of the United Nations family. Therefore, it should be playing a defining role when it comes to the dominant international and geopolitical agendas of the day.
16. On the other hand, many people are prompt to proclaim "trade, not aid!", which is perfectly fine and well-meant, But, doesn't the management of aid pose more problems than aid itself?
17. Thank you for your kind attention!

¹ The first Africans captured arrived on Iberian Peninsula in 1441.

Background on the Africa Day

The Africa Day is celebrated every year on 25 May to commemorate the 1963 founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). On 25 May 1963, 32 African independent States signed a founding charter in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – as a compromise between the Casablanca bloc led by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah (championing a political federation of all African States) and the Monrovia bloc led by Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor (in favour of gradual integration through economic cooperation).

Africa Day is to, first and foremost, celebrate African unity. The OAU's primary aims were:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states and act as a collective voice for the African continent. This was important to secure Africa's long-term economic and political future.
- To co-ordinate and intensify the co-operation of African states in order to achieve a better life for the people of Africa.
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states.
- To ensure that all Africans enjoyed human rights.
- To raise the living standards of all Africans.
- To settle arguments and disputes between members – not through fighting but rather peaceful and diplomatic negotiation.