

**Address by the Executive Secretary**

**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (Preparatory Commission)**

**Dr Lassina Zerbo**

**18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement**

**25-26 October 2019**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to thank His Excellency Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the invitation to participate in this important meeting.

The theme of this Summit – Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world – captures eloquently the urgency and importance of this moment. More than ever, the international community needs to reembrace the principles established in the United Nations Charter and built upon at the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 in Bandung.

The global challenges that we face in the twenty-first century are multi-layered and exceedingly complex. Adequately responding to these challenges will require a level of commitment and determination far beyond what we have witnessed in recent years in the international community.

In order to secure a more peaceful and prosperous existence for future generations, world leaders must recommit to multilateralism, science-based diplomacy, and international cooperation and collaboration in every sphere of international relations. This is particularly true with regard to the threats posed by nuclear weapons.

Founded during the dismantling of the vestiges of the colonial system, the Non-Aligned Movement has consistently sought to promote peace and prosperity through greater freedom, independence, equality, and political and economic self-determination.

The members of the Non-Aligned Movement have long embraced the principle of cooperation between nations on an equal footing in order to identify and promote solutions to the many challenges that threaten to undermine global peace and security. And freedom from the threat of weapons of mass destruction has been one of the core challenges that the group has sought to address.

At its very first summit meeting in Belgrade in 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement recognized that nuclear disarmament was an urgent and imperative need. The group also considered it essential that a complete prohibition on all nuclear tests be concluded at the earliest time, and called for immediate negotiations to achieve this goal.

But even before the NAM Summit in 1961, the Final Communiqué of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955 considered that the production, testing and use of nuclear weapons must be prohibited to save mankind and civilisation from the fear and prospect of wholesale destruction.

The Conference also appealed to states to reach an agreement to suspend experiments with nuclear weapons pending their total prohibition.

A comprehensive ban on nuclear testing was not possible at the time of the Afro-Asian Conference in 1955, or the NAM Summit in 1961. However, the Non-Aligned Movement played a crucial role in supporting the negotiation of the 1963 Partial Test-Ban Treaty (PTBT), which banned all nuclear tests except those conducted underground.

The PTBT succeeded in halting the disastrous consequences of nuclear testing in the atmosphere and underwater. However, achieving a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear explosive testing took decades of persistent multilateral diplomacy and scientific collaboration.

Following the end of the Cold War and a fresh embrace of multilateralism for non-proliferation and disarmament, negotiations finally commenced on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) at the Conference on Disarmament in 1993. And on 24 September 1996, the CTBT was opened for signature at the United Nations by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The important role of the Non-Aligned Movement in this process, both in terms of diplomatic support and scientific contributions, cannot be overstated.

By prohibiting nuclear test explosions by anyone, anywhere, in a transparent, democratic and verifiable manner, the CTBT represents an important and necessary step towards our ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Progress on finishing the unfinished business of the CTBT would reinforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and create momentum for other pending non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives. Perhaps even more importantly, it would bolster the case for multilateralism in addressing global challenges. This is directly in line with the Bandung principles of 1955, as well as subsequent NAM Summit Final Documents throughout the years.

This is a moment of great consequence for our entire community of nations. Preserving a peaceful and prosperous future for generations to come requires that we act with decisiveness and determination. It requires that we adhere to and build upon the principles of Bandung, and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It requires us to promote mutual interests and co-operation.

The CTBT embodies these principles in both letter and spirit. And securing a better tomorrow demands that we act in accordance with these principles today. Let us focus our efforts on upholding the Bandung principles and ushering in a renewed era of multilateral cooperation and collaboration for the good of all humankind. The entry into force and universalization of the CTBT would be important steps towards the realization of these noble goals.

Thank you.