

Excellencies,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen
Colleagues,

It is my honour to welcome you to this High level Workshop, one of the many observances of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, commemorated each year on 29 August. The Day was established in accordance with Resolution A/64/35, adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2009. Though an initiative of Kazakhstan, it was supported unanimously by the international community for which my Government records great appreciation.

This day has great significance for it was on 29 August 1991 that President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, the second largest in the world, thus bringing an end to four decades of nuclear testing. Therefore, 2011 marks the twentieth anniversary of this historic closure and the twenty fifth anniversary of the devastating Chernobyl accident. It is also the year of the tragic Fukushima nuclear plant accident in Japan, for which we express our solidarity with the Japanese government and people. These and other perils of nuclear tests and weapons globally, give us a stark message of the complete futility of nuclear weapons and their tests and explosions.

Kazakhstan is a firm and consistent supporter of the vision of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and joins the world effort to strive for a world free of nuclear weapons. We are, therefore, pleased to host this workshop together with the EastWest Institute to carry forward, even in some small way, the thinking of the international community. Greg thank you for collaborating with us as our partner. The participation of Ambassador Marcie Reis, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Arms Bureau Control of the US State Department, Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, Chair of the 2010 NPT Review Committee, Annika Thurnborg of the Preparatory Commission of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization and Jonathan Granoff of the the Global Security Institute, lend special light to our discussion on contemporary issues.

As we assess progress, we recognize the efforts of G-8, G-20, the P5 States and other global, regional and individual country platforms since May 2010. However, the time has come to step up the momentum, roughly in four key areas: the prevailing thinking about nuclear weapons; the nuclear disarmament process; non-proliferation and security, and the disarmament machinery. I will give some highlights from the five meetings we have had of the Nuclear Discussion Forum, an initiative launched by the EWI and us, but which is now owned by Member States. The Forum has over 34 member countries with varied political orientations, and a report is soon be made available in the coming weeks.

The Forum discussed diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and doctrines, lowering the operational status of nuclear weapons by taking them off hair-trigger alert and altering their present continuous deployment

configurations, together with the need to phase out extended nuclear deterrence. In turn, strengthening regional cooperative security and confidence-building mechanisms become absolutely essential.

A critical measure would be to universalize positive and negative security assurances, extending the legally binding obligations not only for the nuclear-weapons-free zones but also nations and individuals not owning nuclear weapons. Both these points were voiced strongly by President Nazarbayev at the 2010 Washington Nuclear Security Summit. We can thus have more zones, making the entire planet one nuclear-weapon-free zone. We support initiatives to promote a zone free of the weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with the assistance of regional bodies, such as the European Union, Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, of which Kazakhstan is the current Chair of the Ministerial Council.

Steps must be taken to declare the use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity and a violation of International Humanitarian Law. The principles of transparency, verification and accountability require establishing a United Nations-based accounting system on the size, delivery and cost of nuclear arsenals. The call for a universal convention or framework of instruments for the abolition of nuclear weapons worldwide is growing, yet at the same time strongly debated by some. President Nazarbayev, in the meantime, has suggested that a more feasible step would be to draft a Universal Declaration of a Nuclear Weapons-Free World, which would gain greater acceptance step by step, towards the Convention of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

To curb non-proliferation, the entry into force of the CTBT is a *sine qua non*, as also the dismantling of nuclear test sites and their environmental clean up, as we know too well in the case of Semipalatinsk. Simultaneously, is the priority to work towards a ban on the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, and stockpiles of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium. The International Atomic Energy Agency needs to set up a reserve of low enriched uranium, as well as establish a fuel bank, which Kazakhstan is willing to host under IAEA surveillance. We should also encourage the universalization of IAEA safeguards agreement and Additional Protocol, with more nations moving towards it.

Kazakhstan, as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, attaches great importance to the political legitimacy of the Conference on Disarmament. The current stagnation in multilateral negotiations is understood to be due not just to the lack of political will, but also lacunae in the disarmament machinery, such as the principle of consensus, membership, procedures and structures, which will need to be revisited.

We need to give the world human security, which in the words of the Secretary-General, is “a global public good”. I am confident that the workshop will provide glimpses to overcome the nuclear quagmire within our roadmap for 2015.