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**Address by the Executive Secretary  
Of the Preparatory Commission for the  
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

**Mr. Tibor Tóth**

**Meeting Dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Closing of the  
Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site  
Kazakhstan, 13 October 2011**

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Your Excellency the Mayor of the East Kazakhstan province  
Director General Amano,  
Mayor Taue  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The 20th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site is a momentous occasion to celebrate. President Nursultan Nazarbayev's decision to close this site was indeed a defining, historic moment in the history of nuclear disarmament. Kazakhstan offers the rest of the world a clear example of how nuclear disarmament can be undertaken.

This site witnessed 456 nuclear test explosions until its closure in 1991. These tests were the very expression of the nuclear arms race of the Cold War. This site shall always serve as an edifice of the horrific consequences of nuclear testing. The legacy of the human suffering of thousands of victims exposed to radiation, the environmental degradation, and economic loss should never be forgotten. The lessons must not remain unlearned.

Many commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have been made since the closure of Semipalatinsk in 1991. Since then, a lot has been achieved. But even more needs to be done to finally ensure that the world will never have to experience the horrors inflicted by nuclear weapons, or by nuclear weapon testing.

Nuclear testing is the final barrier to the development of nuclear weapons. Finally closing the door on nuclear testing is a critical step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Ending nuclear explosions is a goal on the road to nuclear disarmament that must be reached.

The key word to achieve this goal is political commitment and concrete action. Political commitment and action on the personal, national, and international levels. Again, Kazakhstan is the gold standard in this regard.

The global ban on nuclear weapon testing is yet to be completed through a legally binding global norm. Though a moratorium is in effect, moratoria can never be sufficient to completely shut the door on nuclear testing. Sadly, this is another lesson history teaches us. We need the certainty of a transparent, effective and verifiable legal instrument.

The witnesses of nuclear tests often describe the Earth trembling and the sky turning red. Ladies and gentlemen, we should all pledge our personal, national and international commitment never to allow the ground to shake again, or to allow the sky to turn red in that all too familiar way anywhere on this planet. Let us seize the opportunity of being here at this historic site to learn the lesson that history has imposed on us.

Close the door once and for all on nuclear testing.

Thank you.