



ENGLISH only

CTBTO is also cutting edge when it comes to women in security

Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of Slovenia, on Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization and its contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at the 876th Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation, Vienna, 7 February 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me first thank you for organizing a security dialogue on this very important topic. As one of last year's Vice-Chairs of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO I appreciate all the more this timely attention to its invaluable contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

In addition to what has been already said on behalf of the EU, I would therefore like to thank Ms. Marta Žiaková, Chairperson of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of Slovakia, for her presentation on the impressive Slovak contribution to CTBTO's on-site inspection training. I would also like to thank the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, Dr. Lassina Zerbo, for being here with us today: your eloquence is always inspiring. This was also apparent a few months ago, in September, when you took part in the 12th Bled Strategic Forum in Slovenia, immediately after the latest nuclear test by the DPRK.

Were it not for that test, you would have been able to enjoy a special tour of Ljubljana's old town, which means that you have to come back and visit us again. However, you did manage to make it to the conference itself and my authorities still appreciate it. In fact, that was your first public appearance after the explosion. At Bled you reiterated that the CTBT is a low-hanging fruit that should be grabbed, as entry into force of the Treaty is a realizable target that would be a game changer in global nuclear governance. You made this point both at the event itself and in several interviews that you gave on its margins.

I think that the interest of the public in Slovenia and elsewhere in you and your statements points to one of the essential services that the CTBTO provides and it is the service of attribution. Without the CTBTO we would have neither known nor been entirely sure last year if the DPRK had actually conducted a test and of what magnitude. This is something that in our discussions here at the OSCE regarding cyber issues and cyber security we can only dream about. I am therefore glad that only two weeks ago a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the new permanent Equipment, Storage and Maintenance Facility in Seibersdorf. It will contribute to the further development of the monitoring and verification system of the Treaty, making the work of the Organization even more visible and proving once again that it is fully capable of fulfilling its mandate.

While commending you, Dr. Zerbo, for your hard work and tireless engagement to secure the early entry into force of the Treaty, I would also like to express my appreciation for your efforts in promoting the role of women in the work of the Organization. It was great that you took an active part in the inauguration of the International Gender Champions initiative in Vienna last June and I congratulate you for the commitments that you undertook. Among these are the necessary policies and procedures at the CTBTO to provide flexibility in working hours during the first year of maternity or paternity. You have also committed to instituting an annual "CTBTO Shadowing Program" for promising students with a 4:1 ratio of women to men. Moreover, you are actively encouraging young women to pursue advocacy in science-based diplomacy for peace and security through the CTBTO Youth Group.

The CTBTO is thus not only cutting edge when it comes to its core business, but also when it comes to women in the security sector. As the Chairperson of the OSCE MenEngage Network I think that this fact represents one more reason why the OSCE should continue comparing notes with the CTBTO. I would therefore like to commend once again the Slovak FSC Chairmanship for organizing this event and also use the opportunity to wish my colleague, Ambassador Maria Assunta Accili Sabbatini of Italy, all the best in her role as this year's Chairperson of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.

Thank you.