CTBTO GEM STATEMENT ON ALLEGED LOW-YIELD NUCLEAR TESTS

25 June 2019, Vienna Austria

The CTBTO Group of Eminent Persons (GEM), meeting on the sidelines of the CTBT Science and Technology 2019 conference, issued the following statement:

“The GEM recognizes the overwhelming international support for entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Maintaining the freeze on nuclear testing is paramount. Any set-back to the Treaty, or possibility to resume nuclear testing, would constitute a serious threat to international security.

“In reaction to recent reports on alleged low-yield nuclear testing, the GEM stresses that all States Signatories share the “Zero-Yield” understanding of Article I of the CTBT, which clarifies that the CTBT prohibits all nuclear test explosions, whatever the level of energy released.

“The most effective way to enforce compliance with the zero-yield standard is to bring the Treaty into force, which would allow for intrusive, short-notice, on-site inspections to detect and deter any possible non-compliance.

“If there are credible concerns about a violation of the CTBT, the Treaty has a comprehensive verification system which consists of four elements: the International Monitoring System (IMS), on-site inspection, consultation and clarification, and confidence building measures. Additionally, it allows the use of information from national technical means to address any possible concerns.

“Access to IMS data and information is available freely and without discrimination, but only to States Signatories. The GEM welcomes the great achievement of establishing over the past two decades a reliable and effective verification system, based on the highest scientific and technical standards.

“The UN General Assembly has repeatedly called for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible. This was also emphasised in UN Security Council Resolution 2310.”

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