

STATEMENT
H.E. Mukhtar Tileuberdi,
Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan
at the High-Level Opening Session of TPNW MSP1
(21 June, 2022, Vienna)

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador of Austria, Alexander Kmentt, for assuming the presidency of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), as well as for his tremendous effort to organize this meeting. I wish him every success in his work ahead.

I also extend my appreciation to the Bureau members, and to the facilitators for preparing the substantive documents, and for their willingness to shoulder this immense responsibility on our behalf.

I take this opportunity to thank Madam Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and her team for supporting the States Parties, including Kazakhstan, in all their initiatives.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

The First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW is a remarkable historic achievement following a nearly decade-long collective effort to advance the universal objective of complete nuclear disarmament.

We believe that this Meeting will result in successful outcomes motivated by our deep commitment and political will to find common ground on the issue of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan has been actively involved in all stages of the TPNW drafting and adoption process, and was one of the first states to sign and ratify the Treaty. The TPNW is a testament to the ever-increasing demand for more concrete action towards a world free of nuclear weapons. This aspiration takes on particular importance amidst **current alarming circumstances, when the risks of nuclear confrontation** have reached their highest level since the darkest days of the Cold War. Therefore, the TPNW must become an instrumental platform to voice these concerns and find solutions.

Kazakhstan's decision to join the Treaty was not only politically driven, but also guided by **our longstanding commitment to nuclear disarmament. According to President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, achieving a Nuclear-Weapon-Free world has become an essential part of the nation-wide identity of Kazakh people, giving us the moral right to be at the forefront of global movement to eliminate nuclear weapons.** We draw strength from the humanitarian obligation, which we owe to past generations, who suffered from the destructive legacy of the Soviet nuclear weapons programme.

In this context, I **sincerely welcome the representatives of impacted communities from around the world** attending sideline events of the meeting, including my home country, as witnesses of the nuclear nightmare that we must avoid at all costs.

We strongly agree that focusing on **implementing the Treaty's positive obligations regarding victim assistance and environmental remediation** would offer a promising route for advancing the TPNW agenda at a time of strong political impediments for nuclear disarmament.

To promote the moral imperative for victim assistance and environmental remediation, and ensure broader discussion of this topic, we are hosting a side-event on the margins of this conference along with Kiribati and NGOs with participation of second and third generation victims of nuclear tests. We also welcome all the participants at the exhibition on our country's nuclear legacy.

Excellencies,

Kazakhstan is a co-founder of the Semipalatinsk Treaty, which established the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the northern hemisphere, flanked by two nuclear weapon states. To broadly expand the areas free from nuclear weapons on our planet, we attach particular **importance to enhancing cooperation among the existing zones**, as reflected in Action 5 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.

Kazakhstan will do its utmost in its capacity as the Chair of the First Committee of the forthcoming 77th session of the UN General Assembly. We will endeavor to facilitate important discussions on the issues of disarmament, as well as global challenges and threats to peace that are impacting global growth and development.

Dear colleagues,

The States Parties and Signatories to the TPNW have always demonstrated an outstanding level of convergence and solidarity in their discussions within the preparatory process. I am confident that this spirit of collaboration will be strengthened as the Treaty's membership widens in the coming years. This will pave the way for a fair, inclusive and transparent process for everyone.

In this regard, I fully **welcome the presence of observer states** at today's meeting, and I strongly believe that more will join us in the near future.

We have to work jointly towards **universalization of the TPNW**, based on the experiences of other disarmament treaties. In this process, we can seek the determined support from civil society, academia and youth with their proactive roles and ideas. **This is particularly relevant in the lead-up to the 10th NPT Review Conference in August this year, and beyond.**

We also welcome a decision of this meeting to implement a provision of the TPNW in determining a **deadline for eliminating the nuclear weapons programme**. To this end, we need to establish an adequate international institutional framework **mandated** to verify that all nuclear weapons programmes are eliminated for good and irreversibly.

Mr. President,

Allow me once again to reiterate my delegation's full support for your endeavor to successfully accomplish this meeting's agenda.

Let me also congratulate our distinguished colleagues from Mexico for their nomination to the Presidency of the Second Meeting of States Parties. I assure them of our wholehearted support as they navigate the next steps, **of our full readiness to assume the Presidency of the Third Meeting of States Parties**, and pledge to do our best to fulfill all our obligations.

Kazakhstan is committed to contributing to this forum, and to achieving our long-cherished aspirations towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

Thank you.