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(Video message)

Executive Secretary Floyd, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to send this video message to the seventh CTBT: Science and Technology Conference. I would also like to convey my regret for not being able to be there in person with you today.

In its seventh year, this conference continues to be as relevant as ever. Every passing day we hear about a new development in the science and technology field that impacts our daily lives and the functioning of our societies. We're in the middle of a technological revolution – one taking place not only in a single area but in multiple spheres: artificial intelligence, the internet of things, quantum technologies, digital technologies, new sensors technologies, and additive manufacturing to name just a few. These technologies and many others - individually and collectively – have the power to shape the world positively. Rapid advances in science and technology are contributing to human development and serve as key enablers for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They have the potential to be used in support of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and the promotion of inclusive and human-centered approaches.

While banking on the benefits of science and technology applications, however, the international community must also be ready to curtail any adverse or unintended consequences of such technologies to international peace and security. For example, while advances in science and technology are no longer solely driven by a few States, the economic and social benefits of technology continue to be geographically concentrated. We need to close the technology gap. The technology diffusion further unveiled gender and social inequalities with differing impacts on men, women, girls, and boys. The private sector also has a role in evaluating the dual-use nature of the products that they develop or systems they design. They can conduct risk assessments around potential misuse and diversion to the military sector.

Furthermore, in recent years, advances in various existing and new weapon technologies have raised ethical, political, legal, and humanitarian concerns, including in relation to compliance with international law, especially international humanitarian law, and the questions regarding use of force. In the realm of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, there has been a worrisome trend of creating faster, more accurate and stealthier nuclear weapons. New weapons, with the context of rising tensions, raise the dangerous specter of new tests, undermining the CTBT and the broader disarmament and non-proliferation regime. As noted, technology can be destabilizing. But it is also a force for good – including for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I fully agree with Executive Secretary Floyd that the global moratorium against testing derives much of its strength from the continuous development of the CTBTO's verification system. And I agree that the power of innovation in different fields and the synergic connections between them can contribute to forming a vision for and help to build a world without nuclear weapons. The UN Secretary-General has been long committed to supporting efforts that help reap the benefits of

advancements in science and technology, while also focusing attention on the international cooperation needed to mitigate possible harm. His objective is simple: we must ensure that science and technology applications are used for the benefit of humankind and in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Of course, this is easier said than done.

This conference serves as a valuable opportunity for representatives from different fields to engage one another and exchange experiences and practices to improve verification capabilities and promote their role in strengthening the Treaty and supporting national needs.

Of course, the CTBTO has traditionally been a first adopter in leveraging verification technologies to promote disarmament and arms control. The International Monitoring System – or IMS- has been effective in serving its core purpose of detection. The vast data generated by the IMS also contributes to other areas that can benefit humanity, including tsunami warnings, radiological emergency response, and natural disaster risk reduction through the innovation and integration of systems. Through its sharing of open data, the CTBTO has been able to make significant contributions in various fields, from increasing state accountability in their nuclear activities to supporting states in achieving their Sustainable Development Goals through technology transfer and capacity-building training. This has raised the importance of the openness of data and brought new approaches to verification and confidence-building — key factors in nuclear disarmament and risk reduction that the world urgently needs.

The full potential of the CTBTO will only be realized through the CTBT's entry into force. In this respect, I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Floyd and his team for their enormous efforts in pursuing the signature and ratification of those remaining non-Annex II States and the eight Annex II States whose ratification is essential for the Treaty's entry into force. Thanks to such tireless endeavors, five countries have newly ratified the Treaty since June 2022, moving the Treaty closer to universalization. The CTBT has been instrumental in upholding the norm against explosive nuclear testing and it is now difficult to imagine a world without the Treaty's normative pillar. The continued reinforcement of this norm will rely on our ability to exploit advances in science and technology to make greater contributions to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I look forward to the fruits of your discussions, and to leveraging the collective expertise and knowledge of the scientific, technical, academic, and policy-making communities. I thank you very much for your attention.