



Statement  
by **H.E. Kanat Saudabayev,**  
**Secretary of State - Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the Conference dedicated to the**  
**observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests**  
**and 19th anniversary of the closing of**  
**the Semipalatinsk test site**  
**(Astana, August 26, 2010)**

*Your Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*I wish to use this opportunity to warmly welcome you to the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, and to wish the first international conference on the International Day against Nuclear Tests successful and fruitful deliberations.*

*Beyond any doubts, the nuclear test ban issue comes out on top among major issues of global security.*

*Against this backdrop, we feel especially proud of the fact that this process was significantly contributed to by the Republic of Kazakhstan and its President Nursultan Nazarbayev, when in 1991 he issued a decree permanently closing down one of the largest nuclear test sites in the world and later made a decision to voluntarily renounce the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal. As accurately noted by our President, from that moment on Kazakhstan has become "the epicenter of peace".*

*It was a deeply symbolic and rightful act to hold the ceremony of signing the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty in Semipalatinsk. Thus, not only Kazakhstan, but also our entire region has forever become free from military atom.*

*For 40 years, 456 nuclear explosions were carried out at the Semipalatinsk test site. Nearly one and a half million people have been affected by the consequences of nuclear testing and an immense territory comparable to the size of modern Germany has been contaminated with radiation. That is why our people like no one else know the true cost of nuclear testing.*

*It is very symbolic that eighteen years after the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site August 29, at the initiative of our President who made that wise and courageous decision, was declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.*

*We are grateful to everyone who has supported Kazakhstan's proposal at the UN, especially to those countries that have co-sponsored the resolution. We consider the adoption of this resolution as our joint contribution to the process of reducing the global nuclear threat and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In the years since that Treaty was signed in 1996 it has covered an uneasy but nevertheless a successful path. Nowadays, 182 countries around the world joined the Treaty and 153 have completed their internal procedures to bring the Treaty into force. This testifies to the fact that the ongoing work of the CTBTO is actually close to completion.*

*However, some rather influential states still abstain from signing and ratifying the CTBT, which allows the recognized nuclear weapon states to continue nuclear testing and the threshold states to develop their own nuclear missile programs with impunity. Today, we must put our joint efforts to convince the states, which have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, to do so.*

*In this regard, we express our hope that the U.S. Senate will indeed ratify the Treaty introduced by President Barack Obama, which will serve as an important example for other countries. We also appreciate the decision of Indonesia to ratify the Treaty. The early entry into force of the CTBT will be one of the key areas of effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the most important document upon which the security of all mankind rests.*

*A voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing observed by the world powers today, though an important factor of nuclear security, is clearly insufficient and can not serve as an alternative to a legally binding document such as the CTBT.*

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

*Now that the 29<sup>th</sup> of August is the International Day of Actions, we should all ask ourselves: what else should be done to prevent nuclear testing?*

*In this connection, I would urge the conference participants, all activists of the global non-proliferation process to mark this day with practical actions.*

*Activities to mark August 29 should become widespread and regular.*

*Today, the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site is the territory of peace. The projects on the development of the CTBTO International Monitoring System for nuclear testing and field inspection techniques are being implemented on its territory. In 2008, a large-scale integrated field experiment for on-site inspection was conducted in the Semipalatinsk region.*

*The international community worthily appraised our country's nuclear weapons free choice by offering assistance programmes on conversion of our military-industrial infrastructure, including the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The largest project here was the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme, known as the Nunn – Lugar Programme.*

*I would also like to note the special role the UN plays in rehabilitating the population, territory and environment in the area of the former Semipalatinsk test site.*

*We are very grateful to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon for visiting the former nuclear test site in April this year, his praise for Kazakhstan's efforts to reduce the global nuclear threat, as well as the contribution our country and our leader have made in the process of ridding our planet of these deadly weapons.*

*Standing on ground zero of the former nuclear test site, the UN Secretary General made a strong appeal to the international community to achieve substantial progress towards complete nuclear disarmament. The head of the UN stressed that President Nursultan Nazarbayev had shown exceptional leadership by closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and renouncing nuclear weapons. This has made Semipalatinsk known as a symbol of nuclear disarmament and hope for a nuclear weapons free future.*

*From 1997 to 2009, the UN General Assembly has adopted several resolutions calling on Member States to assist Kazakhstan in tackling the challenges of rehabilitating the former Semipalatinsk region. The Tokyo international conference*

*held in 1999 developed thirty-eight projects in the areas of public health, environment, economic development, humanitarian assistance and education.*

*I would like to note that the Government of Kazakhstan with the assistance of donors and the direct involvement of UN agencies carried out considerable amount of work in the Semipalatinsk region over the past 10 years. Numerous projects in the socio-economic sphere, in the areas of environment, public health and education have been implemented.*

*Japan, Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, the European Commission, USAID, IAEA, and UNDP are actively participating in comprehensively addressing the problems facing the former nuclear test site. We are grateful to all our foreign partners for their support and contribution to the rehabilitation of the Semipalatinsk region.*

*We highly appreciate the achieved level of interaction of Kazakhstan-Russia-US tripartite cooperation regarding the physical protection of the former Semipalatinsk test site facilities.*

*I would like to express our special thanks to Norway for its support in creating international training center for specialists from the countries of Central Asia within the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.*

*A lot remains to be done, however.*

*Despite efforts taken within the framework of state, sectoral and regional programs as well as the international assistance, a comprehensive approach is needed to alleviate the problems of the region. A systematic work is required for studying the environment, water resources condition, and public health. Previously conducted research needs re-examination and an informed decision should be made on the issue of returning uncontaminated lands of the former test site for agricultural use.*

*In this regard, great hopes are placed on a joint project of the Government of Kazakhstan and the UN Development Programme “Improving the competitiveness of the region through innovative approaches to regional planning and delivery of social services” for the years of 2011-2015 worth more than US\$ 11 million.*

*In this context, I would like to express hope that today’s international conference would help improve coordination and efficiency of all parties involved in solving the problems of the Semipalatinsk region.*

***Ladies and gentlemen,***

*By denouncing nuclear weapons, Kazakhstan has convincingly demonstrated that the quintessence of security does not lie in nuclear weapons but in peaceful foreign policy, internal stability, and sustainable politico-economic development of a country. By showing the world an example of voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons and full disarmament, Kazakhstan and its leader continue to be active participants in the global process of nonproliferation. Another confirmation of this is the address of our President to the participants of today's conference and I am honored to read it.*