



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Akorda, Astana

August 26, 2010

To Participants of the International Conference Devoted to the International Day against Nuclear Tests

I welcome participants and guests of the Conference devoted to the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

On August 29, 1991 I signed a presidential decree closing the Semipalatinsk test site. Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal. It was the first time in the world history when a nuclear test site was closed according to the people's will. The people of Kazakhstan, by their own example, have shown the world the way to a safer future.

It is gratifying that in December 2009, at Kazakhstan's initiative, the United Nations declared the day of the closing of the test site as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. I am grateful to all those who have shared our vision of a nuclear weapons free world and have supported the resolution.

For the people of Kazakhstan, who experienced the horrors of nuclear tests first-hand, the issue of a comprehensive test ban is crucially important. During the four decades, 490 nuclear explosions had been conducted on Kazakhstan's soil, causing suffering to more than one and a half million people, with the gravest damage done to vast areas of our country. The memory of the sacrifices, made by our people, gives us a historical and moral right to act as one of the leaders of the global anti-nuclear movement.

It is symbolic that the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty was signed in 2006 in Semipalatinsk. The closing of the Semipalatinsk test site and the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone serve as a bright symbol of hope that achieving a nuclear weapons free world is possible.

An important step in realizing the idea of a nuclear weapons free world was the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC, where I proposed to develop a new universal Treaty on comprehensive horizontal and vertical non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to settle the legal status of nuclear weapons free zones, and to create an international nuclear fuel bank as well as a nuclear security education center.

On the eve of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, marked by the international community for the first time ever, we hope for the deepening of broad international cooperation aimed at saving the world from the nuclear threat. We are bound to do that by the responsibility before future generations. It is important already today to start drafting a Universal Declaration of a Nuclear Weapons Free World which would enshrine the commitment of all states to move towards the ideal of a nuclear weapons free world step by step.

I express hope that this conference will make an important contribution to the cause of non-proliferation and reduction of nuclear weapons. Only by working together we can make our world safer and better.

I wish you all fruitful work and further success in your noble activity!

Nursultan Nazarbayev

I sincerely associate myself with the wishes of our President and would like to express my confidence that concerted active efforts of all participants of the global nonproliferation process year by year will bring us closer to a nuclear weapons free world.

I thank you for your attention.