

25th Anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon Phil Twyford
23 September 2021

Kia Ora.

It is a pleasure to join you from Auckland, as the world comes together to mark the 25th anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, and urge its entry into force.

25 years is a significant milestone. It is an opportunity to underscore the international community's total rejection of nuclear testing.

But the fact we are still celebrating the Treaty's adoption and not its entry into force should challenge us to seriously reflect on the work we have ahead of us.

The international community adopted this Treaty in 1996. At the time it was a statement of our shared determination to end nuclear testing, and to advance towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The CTBT was an essential element of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, and its early entry into force was recognised at the 2000 Review Conference as the first of 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament.

The success of the Treaty's International Monitoring System, too, is testament to our collective determination to bring the Treaty's aims to fruition.

But, 25 years after the Treaty was adopted we are still discussing how we could achieve entry into force.

An overwhelming majority of the world's countries – 170 in fact – have signed and ratified the Treaty. The trouble is that eight of those countries the world needs to sign and ratify, have not.

New Zealand calls on India, North Korea and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Treaty. And we call on China, Egypt, Iran, Israel and the United States to ratify it.

New Zealand is firmly committed to a world without nuclear weapons, and we have always regarded the Treaty as a vital component of global nuclear disarmament.

A formative experience for New Zealand was witnessing the devastating impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific. For five decades, France, the US and the UK conducted more than three hundred nuclear tests across the Pacific, far from their own countries. The legacy of these tests is still being felt by the people of the Pacific. The tests forcibly removed them from their lands, dislocated their communities and poisoned their ecosystems.

Today, New Zealand stands with Pacific governments in demanding justice.

The threat of nuclear weapons is even more urgent today than it was when our Treaty first opened for signature, a quarter century ago.

In advance of the 50th anniversary NPT Review Conference early next year, New Zealand calls on those eight hold-out states to ratify with urgency, and to the people of the rest of the world on the right side of history.

Thank you.