

CTBT and role of the CYG in the Korean Peace and denuclearisation process

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is an honour and pleasure for me – a CTBTO Youth Group member from Kazakhstan – to address the issue of nuclear testing, the CTBTO and the DPRK.

The nuclear crisis in the Korean peninsula is a long-standing problematic issue which constitutes a threat and challenge to regional and global peace and security. DPRK's nuclear tests have demonstrated the increasing technical capacity of their nuclear weapons program and served as acts of provocation and conflict escalation. Conversely, the recent steps by DPRK to place a moratorium on nuclear testing and destroy a nuclear testing facility serve as confidence-building measures which have helped the Inter-Korean peace process.

However, these steps have not been sufficient to overcome suspicions from the USA or the international community regarding the intentions of DPRK with regard to their nuclear weapons program, nor to free up the blocks in the DPRK-USA process. Further progress by DPRK to verifiably proscribe nuclear testing would be of enormous benefit to the diplomatic processes, and serve as incremental steps towards full denuclearisation.

I come from a country which, as part of the Soviet Union, was 'defended' by nuclear weapons and experienced nuclear tests, but is now a champion for the CTBT, a member of a regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and a supporter of global nuclear disarmament.

I believe that DPRK will also be able to move from its current reliance on nuclear weapons, end nuclear tests, join a North-East Asia NWFZ and support global nuclear disarmament. However, this will not be easy, as it will require diplomacy and reconciliation in order to move from an adversarial regional framework to one of peace and cooperation.

To succeed a mix of political, technical and social/cultural measures will be required.

The CTBT can make an important contribution to this process, and the CTBTO Youth Group can play a number of roles.

One role is to engage youth in public promotion of the role of the CTBT in the Korean peace process. Currently there are around 500 students and young professionals who are the members of the CYG. However, number of CYG members from the Korean Peninsula is low – about 10 individuals- and so far there has not been much attention from the CYG to the connections between the Korean peace process and the CTBT. I therefore welcome this session, one task we have is to increase the number of CYG members from Korea, III CYG conference could take place there.

In order to involve public, it is essential to inform through (peace) education. Initially considering lack of knowledge and sufficient coverage of inter-relations between North and South Korea in schools, young people grow not paying attention to the nature and further gradual development of peace process and denuclearization, which is seen only in the frames of prior historical war context and ultimate unification objective. To transform this situation of conflict neglect and disengagement by younger generation, peace education should be improved by including it in school curriculum and university programs on nuclear disarmament.

There is nuclear non-proliferation education and research center (NEREC) in Seoul, which could expand its programs within South Korea in order to attract more young people to join and could be a place to host CYG chapter to conduct joint events and collaborate on common projects. KAIST is example of university which teaches nuclear engineering programs and could link to the characteristics and advantageous elements of CTBTO such as International Monitoring System with its technical benefits. This could be implemented by introducing a special course with the focus on CTBT(O) and include practical application of the IMS to the case of Korean Peninsula, in particular nuclear tests conducted by North Korea. It could serve as a basis for cooperation between KAIST and James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, USA (if such connection was not established yet) in order to contribute to capacity building in the field of nuclear technologies.

Dialogue and exchange forming can contribute to peacebuilding in Korean process, small steps such as education tourism - visit to DMZ could stimulate interest amongst public, personal involvement and touch to the history, to better understand divide and learn about current crisis. Some of the recent actions could be continued to be taken in the area of arts, sports and culture. For example, unified Korean team during the Olympics in South Korea and performance of K-Pop artists in North Korea in 2018, joint bid to host Olympic Games in 2032, invitation and participation of North Koreans in the PyeongChang Peace Forum 2020, where session on CTBT could be hold. PyeongChang city could become a member of Mayors for Peace (MfP) organization that is headquartered in Hiroshima, Japan. Since number of member-cities from Korean Peninsula is low and comprises around 18. Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan is one of the lead cities of the MfP.

The experience of Kazakhstan and other countries that have suffered from humanitarian consequences of nuclear tests can be used to encourage North Korea to join the CTBT. The International Day Against Nuclear Tests on August 29 is a good opportunity to publicise this.

Public hearing, debates and motions on CTBT can be organized by the members of Parliament in South Korea, so that population, including youth can follow with the agenda and global developments in the field of nuclear disarmament. To engage this topic globally, in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which includes South and North Korea as its members, and CTBTO, CYG – session at the forum of young parliamentarians and standing committee on peace and security could be held.

In these lines, it is important to mention role of peace journalism which could be helpful and contribute to the development of dialogue in Korean Peninsula. Peace journalism goes beyond of ordinary journalism by focusing more on positive and impactful narratives of transformation by avoiding language of conflicts, blaming, providing simple facts and information.

It is challenging to engage youth in North Korea, however CYG with the help of CTBTO and highlighting UN disarmament agenda point on future generations and SDGs could help to send letter to the youth league of North Korea informing them about CYG and inviting them to join. Regardless of any reaction either positive negative or non-response, this could be a step to start youth-led talks.

Thank you