

PC.DEL/203/09
27 March 2009

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Uzbekistan

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HEAD OF THE MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN TO
THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 March 2009

**Regarding the entry into force of the
Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia**

On 21 March 2009, following its ratification by the Republic of Uzbekistan (10 May 2007), the Kyrgyz Republic (27 July 2007), the Republic of Tajikistan (13 January 2009), Turkmenistan (17 January 2009) and the Republic of Kazakhstan (19 February 2009), the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force.

This happened thanks to the joint constructive security-related efforts of all five Central Asian States, for whom the question of disarmament and non-proliferation is of no small importance.

The initiative to establish a nuclear-free zone was first voiced by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, at the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 28 September 1993 and was fully supported by our neighbours — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan — on the basis of the Almaty Declaration adopted in February 1997.

This Central Asian initiative became possible thanks to a careful study of international experience in the area of non-proliferation and the identification of Central Asia's own role in strengthening global security.

From 1997 to 2002, with the active assistance of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a series of expert group working meetings were held in Geneva, Ashgabad, Tashkent, Sapporo (twice) and Samarkand. In the second half of 2002, the United Nations Headquarters hosted two consultative meetings with experts from the "nuclear big five" (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America), as a result of which substantial amendments and suggestions were incorporated into the draft document.

On 8 September 2006, the Treaty was signed at Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan), a former nuclear test site, by all the Central Asian States, marking the culmination of many years of

joint work on the part of the countries of the region and the other parties involved — the United Nations Secretariat, the IAEA and the “nuclear big five”.

Under the Treaty, each party undertakes not to conduct research on, develop, manufacture, stockpile or otherwise acquire, possess or exercise control over any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device in any form.

In accordance with the Protocol on security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States, the States officially in possession of nuclear weapons (the French Republic, the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) are to sign and ratify that document, with this constituting a legal guarantee that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any party to the Treaty.

The practical implementation of this initiative is in keeping with the priority tasks and efforts of the countries of the region aimed at ensuring the stable and sustainable development of the Central Asian region as a whole and at making their contribution to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime.

It should be mentioned that the Republic of Kazakhstan organized the signing ceremony in Semipalatinsk, that the Kyrgyz Republic is acting as the Depositary State, and that the first consultative meeting will take place in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The aspiration of these States acting as international partners in doing what needs to be done for this Treaty to enter into force confirms their commitment to strengthen regional and international peace and security as well as their practical involvement in the universal non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

In this way, the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone has become the sixth in the world, alongside similar zones in Latin America, Africa, the Pacific, South-East Asia and the Antarctic, which bring together more than 100 countries.