

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK, PRESIDENT OF THE
72ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THE HIGH-LEVEL SIGNATURE CEREMONY FOR THE TREATY ON THE
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this historic event. In particular, I want to acknowledge President Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera and Under-Secretary General Nakamitsu for their leadership. This was supported by the hard work of many dedicated delegations.

It is also my pleasure to welcome Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, to this ceremony. Civil society played an instrumental role in bringing this Treaty to life – and I am glad to see many of you here again with us.

I think we have two jobs today. We need to pause for a moment and acknowledge what has been achieved. That's always the nice part of the speech. But, unfortunately, the challenges ahead are too big to leave unaddressed.

The aspiration for progress in nuclear disarmament is older than many of you in this room. It is part of the core principles of the UN – and for good reason. The effects of the use of nuclear weapons are devastating – both in scale and longevity. Those who die instantly are often described as the lucky ones. We cannot underestimate the risk. It comes from many fronts. No country can claim that it is safe from a potential nuclear attack. Unfortunately, testing of these weapons, unanimously condemned by the Security Council, continues even in the 21st Century. There could also be a miscalculation. Or weapons could end up in the wrong hands.

Today we are taking action. This Treaty is one more step towards our collective goal of a world without nuclear weapons. And we should recognize it as such.

As I said, unfortunately, our work isn't done. It isn't even close to being done.

We need to keep working. We need to keep talking. And we need to do it in a way:

- Which takes into account our global security environment.
- Which addresses the sensitivities on all sides.
- Which includes the maximum number of players, including countries with nuclear arms.
- And which finds the balance between idealism and pragmatism we sorely need.

This Treaty – and its signing and ultimate entry into force – should and deserves to be welcomed. It will demonstrate the will of UN Member States to bring about change. It will raise public awareness about the risks of nuclear weapons. It will keep us on track for achieving our goal of a world in which nuclear weapons exist only in movies or books. But we need to do more to get the whole way there.

Thank you.