Statement by the Nordic and Baltic countries at the 67th session of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission

Vienna, November 25-27, 2026

Thank you, Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We fully align with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Within the first five years of its existence, the Nordic and Baltic countries had all signed and ratified the CTBT. This testifies to our countries' early support for the Treaty and the strong norm against nuclear testing that it embodies.

As we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Treaty, we can confirm that the Treaty has served us well. Any nuclear weapon test explosion would be harmful for global non-proliferation efforts and for international peace and security. All States must refrain from any actions contrary to the CTBT's object and purpose.

Apart from securing a legally binding ban on nuclear testing, entry into force would provide important elements of the verification regime such as the requirement to consult and clarify, as well as on-site inspections. This would efficiently address concerns about possible non-compliance within the established framework of the Treaty. We strongly urge all states, in particular the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT. We repeat our deep regret over Russia's withdrawal of its ratification. It is of serious concern how little meaning Russia appears to give to its earlier commitments.

Chair,

We are deeply concerned about the continued expansion of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic programmes, in clear violation of the relevant United Security Council Resolutions. We once again call on the DPRK to undertake complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament of its nuclear weapons, and to cease all nuclear and ballistic missile related activities. The DPRK must refrain from all nuclear testing. We call on the DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay. We also express our continuing strong condemnation of cooperation between the DPRK and the Russian Federation, which makes the DPRK complicit in Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Chair,

The Nordic and Baltic countries can support the recommendations of Working Group A, including the draft decisions on the 2027 Budget Update. As we embark on the budget discussions for the next biennium, it is time to seriously address how to tackle the long-term sustainment of the International Monitoring System. The Executive Secretary has been very clear about the projected deterioration of data availability and data quality with the current status quo. The cost of sustainment of the IMS will increase if we continue to delay the provision of adequate funds. We must not forget that we had agreed to work on sustainment scenario C, which would limit the risk to the IMS. This will not be possible with a zero nominal growth budget. But even with a zero real growth budget – or a zero real growth budget plus – we might have to reconsider the distribution of funds between the Major Programmes, IMS, IDC and OSI,

and between the activities carried out by each of them. We encourage the PTS to initiate contingency planning for this eventuality, keeping States Signatories informed about alternative allocation scenarios.

Chair,

The collection rate for 2026 remains alarmingly low. This has led to a postponement of important activities and staff recruitment. Given the continuous staff turnover, timely recruitment is essential to maintain a fully functioning and efficient organisation and ensure continuity of operations. Additionally, the efforts necessary to address the current liquidity situation take time and resources away from programmatic work. The situation is not sustainable. We urge all States Signatories to make every effort to pay their contributions in full and on time. Holding back payments hinders predictable and proper planning and execution of the PTS's work.

Chair,

We congratulate the PTS and Namibia for successfully organizing the recent OSI Integrated Field Exercise and we look forward to its in-depth results and analyses next year. The exercise has strengthened confidence that the Treaty's 'final' verification measure can be implemented effectively when required. It is crucial that experience, know-how and capabilities gained during this exercise will be carried forward.

And finally, Chair, we are certain that under your able stewardship we will have a successful and timely conclusion of this meeting. As has become the practice, we remain in favour of a concise and factual report of this session, focusing on its operational outcomes. We look forward to working with the new Prep.Com and Working Group Chairs and officers next year as we tackle important challenges, including the 2028-2029 budget and the prioritization efforts it will require.

Thank you.