

CTBT Article XIV Conference 24-25 September

UK Ministerial intervention

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I am very honoured to represent the UK at this 6th Article XIV Conference; and to reaffirm the UK's strong support for the CTBT.

The presence of so many Ministers and of the UN Secretary General testifies to the enduring support of the vast majority of the international community for a once and for all, legally binding ban on all nuclear weapon test explosions and indeed all nuclear explosions.

This should encourage us. This, and the genuine view that the prospects for the Treaty's Entry into Force – after so long – have never been better. We can see this in many ways:

- The steadily growing number of countries signing and ratifying the Treaty, each one of which is another brick in the wall against nuclear explosions;
- The strong commitment of President Obama to pursue US ratification of the Treaty, and his commitment to renew US leadership in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament – today's UNSC summit is a tangible expression of this commitment;
- The new commitment to Treaty ratification by some other Annex 2 countries, such as China and Indonesia. The other recent opportunities to make our world a safer place, afforded by the prospect of negotiations towards an FMCT, and the commitment by President Obama and President Medvedev to negotiate a new START Treaty.
- And the universal condemnation of the nuclear tests announced by the DPRK, most recently in May this year.

The UK is determined to work towards a world without nuclear weapons. That is one of the reasons we remain a staunch supporter of the CTBT – support which British Prime Minister most recently reaffirmed in publishing “the Road to 2010” plan in July. We also strongly support the continued development of the Treaty's global verification regime. We have recently seen the current – and ever improving – capability of the CTBT's International Monitoring System with the detection of DPRK's underground nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. The IMS provides not only a vital technical backbone to the verification regime for the CTBT, in conjunction with On Site Inspections, but also a wider deterrent against states believing they can clandestinely and qualitatively improve their nuclear weapons through nuclear explosive testing.

Others who share our vision of a world without nuclear weapons, and our commitment to the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, should also support the CTBT.

I appeal to those few remaining Annex 2 countries to recognise the Treaty as a tangible opportunity to advance that cause, and to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. We can then at last put an end to the scourge of nuclear explosions, and thus help create the safer world we all want, and that future generations deserve.