



BRAZIL

Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT)

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Statement by

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Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs

Ministry of External Relations

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Ambassador Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado, I have the honor to address this Conference and to reiterate Brazil's unwavering commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) as a crucial element of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and an important step towards our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

One of the first countries to endorse the call for a total ban on nuclear testing, Brazil actively participated in the Geneva negotiations that led to the adoption of the treaty and signed the CTBT on the very same day it was opened for signature in September 1996. Brazil was also one of the first countries to ratify it in 1998.

Brazil deeply regrets that, almost thirty years after the conclusion of negotiations on the CTBT, its entry into force remains stalled. Brazil would like to urge once again all countries that have not acceded to the Treaty, in particular Annex II countries, to do so as a matter of urgency.

Mr. President,

The international community has been united in calling for the earliest entry into force of the Treaty. It constitutes one of the "13 Steps" for nuclear disarmament adopted by consensus in the 2000 Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. A decade after that, the 2010 NPT Review Conference renewed this goal. In particular, through Action 10 of the 2010 NPT Plan of Action, nuclear-weapon States undertook "to ratify the CTBT with all expediency, noting that positive decisions by nuclear-weapon States would have the beneficial impact towards the ratification of the Treaty". The Plan of Action also recognized nuclear-weapon States' special responsibility to encourage Annex II countries, in particular those which have not acceded to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Three years after the adoption of Action 10, its implementation continues to be elusive. Brazil was encouraged by President Barack Obama's speech in Prague, in 2009, that his administration would pursue immediately and aggressively the US ratification of the instrument. We also took note with satisfaction of President Obama's speech in Berlin, last June, and his renewed commitment in this regard. We continue to believe that US ratification would be a "game changer" in this process and would surely set an example for other recalcitrant Annex II countries.

Mr. President,

By upholding the CTBT, the vast majority of the international community acknowledges its prominent role in combating both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.

It is not without concern, therefore, that we continue to learn of some States' activities aimed at the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons through other means, notably non-explosive experiments. In our view, such activities are contrary to the object and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), its spirit, if not the letter, and strongly undermine its desired impact as a nuclear disarmament measure.

Brazil reiterates its call on all States to refrain not only from nuclear weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions but also from any other relevant non-explosive experiments, including subcritical experiments, for nuclear weapons development purposes.

We are pleased to note that this understanding was endorsed by all Latin American and Caribbean countries at a Senior Officials Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last August.

It is clear, in Brazil's view, that at some point there will be a need to prohibit nuclear-weapons tests in all their forms, including both supercritical and subcritical tests.

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank former Executive-Secretary Mr. Tibor Tóth for his strong commitment and important accomplishments, which we very much acknowledge.

Also, Brazil very much appreciates that for the first time a citizen of a brotherly developing country – Burkina Faso – will head the CTBTO's Preparatory Committee. We would like to wish Dr. Lassina Zerbo our best wishes of success during his new term. We are convinced that his technical knowledge and expertise will contribute to leading the Provisional Technical Secretariat in the right direction, especially with a view to ensuring the treaty's early entry into force, which we consider to be the utmost priority. Brazil pledges its full support to him.

Mr. President,

In order to conclude, we believe that the long protracted delay in the Treaty's entry into force throws shadows on the wisdom of that well-established certainty, existent until some years ago, amidst the international community, on the virtues of a progressive, step-by-step approach in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. If every step in this route is to take more than thirty years, the necessary question is how long it will take us to achieve the imperative of nuclear disarmament.

Brazil will continue to call for the earliest entry into force of the CTBT. And although we may acknowledge the relevance and urgency of other steps like the Fissile Material Treaty, especially if they provide for effective nuclear disarmament, we believe we cannot circumvent anymore the need to commence negotiations on a clear, multilateral and legally binding commitment, on the part of all States, to the goal of the elimination of all nuclear weapons, with clearly defined benchmarks and timelines.

I thank you.