

**TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY**

**NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT BY H.E DEBORAH GEELS
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AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

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Mr Chairman,

It is with honour that I take the floor on behalf of New Zealand to mark the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As a country firmly committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons, we believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a vital step towards reaching this goal.

We welcome progress achieved towards ratification of the Treaty since its opening for signature. The great number of state signatories and ratifications from all across the globe is testament to the almost universalisation of the Treaty. We congratulate Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo and the staff of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO for their hard work in bringing the Treaty closer to Entry into Force.

New Zealand also salutes the progress made to date on the Treaty's verification regime, particularly the International Monitoring System. It is crucial that we continue to build and maintain this system so that it is fully operational upon the Treaty's entry into force. The claimed underground nuclear test by the DPRK on 6 January once again confirmed the importance of the IMS in providing timely and accurate data on such an event. New Zealand also appreciates the valuable scientific and civil benefits already provided by the IMS, including with regards to tsunami early warnings and other disaster alert systems.

But while we are pleased to be here to mark the treaty's 20th birthday, and the progress achieved on technical aspects of the verification regime, we would be even happier if we were celebrating the first anniversary of the CTBT's Entry into Force. We call on the remaining Annex Two states – China, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America – to move to ratify the CTBT as quickly as possible, so that the Treaty may enter into force and become international law.

Mr Chairman,

This 20th anniversary is also a timely reminder of the real reason why the international community recognised the need for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. The vast majority of nuclear weapon detonations have occurred as nuclear tests, with literally hundreds of atmospheric and underground tests explosions having been carried out in the Pacific. The health, ecological, economic and sociological effects of nuclear weapons can be contained in neither time nor space, as many people can attest. New Zealand would once again like to highlight that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons should spur the entry into force of the CTBT as a step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The CTBT also makes an important contribution to constraining the qualitative improvement of existing nuclear weapons and limiting the development of advanced new types of such weapons, as well as preventing their proliferation. We must resist any temptation to slip back towards an arms race, and we must take concrete steps on nuclear disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

New Zealand is proud to take the lead this year - in close cooperation with our core partners Australia and Mexico - in drafting the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the CTBT, which recognises the Treaty as a fundamental instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We will endeavour to bring a strong and supportive resolution to the General Assembly, and will work hard to obtain as many co-sponsors as possible.

Mr Chairman, please rest assured that New Zealand will continue to support the Treaty to enable it to fulfil its intended purpose.

Thank You Mr Chairman.

