

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

2015 CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST BAN TREATY

29 September 2015

Mr Co-Presidents,

I am honoured to represent the United Kingdom at this ninth Article XIV Conference and pleased to reaffirm the United Kingdom's strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The participation of so many distinguished colleagues here today testifies to the enduring support of the vast majority of the international community for a legally binding ban on all nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions.

As one of the first signatories to the Treaty the United Kingdom is a long time supporter of the CTBT and its entry into force. Membership of the Treaty has been steadily growing and each and every signature and ratification takes us closer to our shared goal of its universal application. In that regard, I welcome the ratifications by Congo, Niue and Angola since the last Article XIV Conference in 2013.

2016 will see the 20th anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and I would encourage any remaining States that are outside of the Treaty to sign up and make a commitment not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. I would also urge signatories that have yet to ratify to do so before we reach this milestone and turn their political commitment into a legally binding one. A particular responsibility rests with Annex 2 states and I urge them to ratify in order to enable the Treaty to enter into force.

This Treaty is clear in its purpose – to end nuclear test explosions. The Treaty is clear about what that means. We need to focus, as this meeting does, on achieving entry into force and universal support. There are other fora to discuss other issues, whether disarmament or non-explosive testing. The First Committee, under way now, will see lively debate on these very subjects. We must not allow these debates to undermine the CTBT and the work of the CTBTO. If we continue to focus on the key objectives of the Treaty, we can ensure the best chance of securing the remaining ratifications needed for early entry into force. We are more likely to fail in this endeavour however, if those whose ratification is required are confused about the Treaty's core purpose.

The CTBTO's ability to detect nuclear explosions is unique and a credit to all of those countries who have contributed to it. The United Kingdom itself is an active and enthusiastic participant in all of the CTBTO's work and we believe there is great benefit to be found from supporting and interacting with the Organisation. We have been key contributors to the technical development of the Verification regime including the International Monitoring System, International Data Centre and On Site Inspection, indeed the UK played a leading role in developing, running and evaluating the hugely successful Integrated Field Exercise in 2014. We have made voluntary contributions to bring experts from developing countries to technical Working Groups as part of our wider outreach activities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank other states who have also made considerable efforts to strengthen and support the regime through providing experts and funding. Through the data provided to the International Date Centre in Vienna we can ensure that no state is able to carry out illicit nuclear tests that go undetected. That goes to the heart of what the Treaty is all about – ending nuclear test explosions.

Pending entry into force of the Treaty we welcome the voluntary commitments of those States who, like the United Kingdom, have declared a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions.

Mr Co-Presidents,

Let me reassure you again of our commitment to ensure the entry into force of the Treaty. Article XIV of the Treaty relates to how we can work together to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate early entry into force. The United Kingdom stands ready to assist any country make the domestic case for ratification. Entry into Force of the CTBT would be a tangible step towards a safer and more stable world, one in which the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can become a reality.