

## Joint Statement of NGOs

Statement of Non-Governmental Organisations to the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT),  
3 to 5 September 2003, in Vienna

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Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, and Colleagues,

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an integral part of our global efforts to achieve international security for all, free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction. All states should recognise that action on the CTBT is all the more important in light of the rising hostilities across the globe.

The CTBT was brought about largely through the hard work and determination of NGOs and millions of ordinary people around the world. In all these years, the NGO community has never faltered in its advocacy for a test-ban treaty. People throughout the world understood that ending nuclear testing was essential for three powerful reasons: to halt the spiralling arms race; to obstruct the emergence of new nuclear powers; and to prevent further devastation of human health and the global environment, already contaminated from decades of atmospheric and underground explosions.

Since the middle of the 20th century, more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted throughout the world, with direct, serious, and long-term adverse health and environmental effects. It is estimated that atmospheric testing directly produced 430,000 fatal human cancers by the year 2000. Eventually, that total will be 2.4 million. If the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons leads to new rounds of testing, as we believe that it will, deleterious impacts on public health and social well-being can only increase.

It is crucial to the stability and future of the non-proliferation regime in its entirety that the CTBT enters into force, as was unanimously confirmed by all NPT States Parties at the 2000 Review Conference. Among the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament identified in the Final Document of that Conference, the very first two are devoted to the CTBT and nuclear testing. These steps stressed the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions. Furthermore, the document called for maintaining the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions pending entry into force of the Treaty.

A ban on testing is an essential step towards nuclear disarmament because it helps to block dangerous nuclear competition and new nuclear threats from emerging. However, it must be recognised that technological advances in nuclear weapons research and development mean that a ban on nuclear test explosions by itself cannot prevent qualitative improvements of nuclear arsenals. Efforts to improve nuclear arsenals and to make nuclear weapons more useable in warfare will jeopardise the test-ban and non-proliferation regimes. We call on all states possessing nuclear weapons to halt all qualitative improvements in their nuclear armaments, whether or not these improvements require test explosions.

In this context, we are alarmed by recent disclosures of proposals by the present US administration for the research and development of a new generation of earth-penetrating nuclear warheads and new types of „low yield“ warheads, as well as proposals to reduce the time necessary to resume underground nuclear testing.

We recognise that any new step in the field of security generally often involves some risk, but the CTBT has been carefully designed so that its benefits greatly outweigh any possible risks. The CTBT establishes a far-reaching global monitoring, verification, and compliance system. A series of independent studies, most recently by the US National Academy of Sciences in 2002, have all concluded that the system is capable of detecting nuclear explosions in all environments with a high degree of confidence, thereby deterring potential treaty violators. We commend the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organisation and the Provisional Technical Secretariat for their work in establishing the International Monitoring System and International Data Centre, which are already proving their capabilities beyond expectations. We support efforts to promote the civil and scientific applications of the CTBT verification technology as a means of recouping costs and expanding the range of CTBT stakeholders.

We oppose attempts by some states to delay full construction of the CTBT's verification system. Such

behaviour harms efforts to increase the number of parties to the Treaty and prevents the system from demonstrating its full technical capabilities, thereby giving comfort to those who question the Treaty's verifiability. We deplore efforts by a small number of states to obstruct finalisation of the on-site inspection arrangements for the Treaty by not paying their dues, not participating in discussions on the on-site-inspection manual, or by adopting unreasonable positions in those negotiations. We call on all signatories to provide the political, financial and technical support necessary for the earliest implementation of all elements of the CTBT verification system.

We believe that global security would be enhanced if all states with nuclear test sites engaged in confidence-building processes, including transparency measures at those sites, during the interim period prior to their complete elimination. In this regard, we note with interest the Russian proposal for mutual confidence-building measures with the United States following the CTBT's entry-into-force. We applaud Ambassador Hoffman's visit to the Novaya Zemlya test site earlier this year and encourage the United States and Russia, as well as India, Pakistan, and China to pursue initiatives to increase transparency at their test sites to dispel concerns about ongoing activities at those sites, including subcritical tests.

Despite overwhelming international support for the CTBT, 12 key states have not yet signed and/or ratified. The Bush administration has declared that it is not even seeking Senate approval for ratification. Washington has also announced that it will not pay its share of, nor participate in, non-IMS activities of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organisation, including preparations for on-site inspections. Although the US remains a signatory, it was the only country to oppose the retention of the CTBT on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in November 2001.

Most importantly, this conference must train its attention and its future efforts on the signatures and ratification by those states that are required by the stipulations of Article XIV. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, and Pakistan must sign and ratify the CTBT. China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, the United States, and Viet Nam must now ratify, without further procrastination. The longer these states wait to join the Treaty, the greater the chance that some nation may begin testing and set off a dangerous international action-reaction cycle of military and nuclear confrontation.

It is the fundamental responsibility of this meeting to send a strong message to the remaining 12 CTBT hold-out states and urge their prompt signature and ratification without conditions or reservations. States Parties must also endorse the continuation of the current global nuclear test explosion moratorium until such time as the CTBT enters into force.

NGOs are ready to make greater contributions to the efforts for entry-into-force. In particular, they will be able to do so if the interaction between governments, parliaments, NGOs and the media is intensified. Governments, for instance, should report to their parliaments on activities to implement the decisions of earlier Article XIV Conferences and their plans for future activities. The matter of entry-into-force should be discussed at regional intergovernmental meetings and parliamentary bodies linked to such organisations. The Provisional Technical Secretariat should be asked to assist the intersessional coordinator in compiling reports from States Parties on their initiatives, and to make them available to all Parties on a regular basis. NGOs, in the meanwhile, will increase their own efforts at monitoring and reporting these initiatives to the public and to the media. We will continue our advocacy efforts aimed at the CTBT hold-out states. Through a strengthened network of NGOs, governments, international bodies and the media, we can promote further initiatives, intensify public discussion, and exert broad pressure on the hold-out states.

No single government or individual leader should be allowed to stand in the way of the historic opportunity to permanently end the scourge of nuclear testing, an indispensable step towards eliminating nuclear weapon threats and preventing nuclear war.

This presentation was prepared and supported by NGOs who have worked for a comprehensive test-ban treaty for many years, in many countries, and in many ways. The list of supporting NGOs is attached to the extended version of this statement, which is distributed to delegations. On behalf of the world's citizens, we urge you to do all that is within your power to ensure the entry-into-force of the CTBT and the full implementation of all elements of this historic Treaty.

Thank you.