



Statement

By

to the Conference for Facilitating the Entry  
Into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test  
Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Mr. President,

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, on behalf of the delegation of Israel, on being elected President of this Conference.

Our thanks to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, Ambassador Tibor Toth, and the staff of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS), for their dedicated work in preparing for the CTBT's entry into force and especially for the efforts invested in establishing its verification regime.

I would also like to commend the PTS on its important contribution to the overall international efforts aimed at monitoring radiation during the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan. In its activities during this crisis, the importance of the Treaty's developing International Monitoring System and International Data Center has again been clearly demonstrated.

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to reiterate my Government's unequivocal support for the CTBT. Israel's support has been manifested in International fora as well as in the practical work of building up the Treaty Organization and its verification regime. Israeli experts have been actively participating in many activities of the Preparatory Commission such as tabletop exercises, training courses, field exercises and technical workshops. Since the last Conference we have registered an improved capacity of the International Monitoring System (IMS) stations, International Data Center (IDC) capabilities, and On-Site Inspection (OSI) necessary elements. At the same time, several gaps still remain that have to be bridged over.

In the first place there is a need for universal commitment not to carry out any nuclear test explosions and any other nuclear explosions. The DPRK's nuclear explosion on 25 May 2009, widely deplored by the international community, was on the one hand a demonstration of the Treaty's technical capabilities but on the other hand an ominous reminder that the concerted will of many, even with improved detection capabilities, is not enough to enforce this norm and to respond collectively in an unambiguous manner.

We should redouble the efforts to complete the CTBT verification regime to the level necessary for entry into force. This includes several aspects of OSI such as: completion of mastering all technologies and techniques; procurement of OSI equipment; continuation of the training of OSI inspectors; the completion of the draft OSI Operational Manual; and finalizing the buildup of OSI infrastructure.

Second, there is an urgent need to complete the buildup of the remaining IMS stations in accordance with the CTBT, their operation and maintenance, and the transmission of their data to the IDC. The focus should now be on major geographical gaps still existing in the system, especially in the Middle East, which currently lacks an adequate level of coverage. Until the designed IMS stations are in place, we should take measures to strengthen the existing system's capabilities. Such measures may include temporary operation of auxiliary seismic stations as primary ones. Since the existing IMS system is already mature, the issue of station maintenance has also become an increasingly important issue.

Third, the continued testing and exercising of IDC capabilities as required for entry into force is an important component.

Additional tasks exist in the fields of organization and financial support for the Treaty and its verification regime. With regard to organization it is necessary to

prepare the structure and procedures of the Technical Secretariat in order to enable it to function efficiently and to fulfill its duties upon entry into force.

Mr. President,

Let me turn for a moment to Israel's CTBT-related infrastructure, established according to the Treaty's requirements, and to recent activities.

Since the launching of the CTBT negotiations, Israel has been supporting it meaningfully in many respects. We have lent our active support to the establishment of the verification regime of the Treaty, recognizing it to be one of the main requirements for the Treaty's entry into force. Israel has done so also out of its genuine concern about the poor coverage of the IMS mechanism in the Middle East region.

Israel has constructed two auxiliary seismic stations in Meron and Eilat, as required by the Treaty. These stations were successfully certified by the PTS, and have been continuously transmitting their data to the IDC, through the Israeli National Data Center (NDC) located in the Soreq Nuclear Research Center. Israel also operates a radionuclide laboratory which is expected to be certified by the PTS shortly, making it one of 16 CTBT radionuclide laboratories operating around the world to support the Treaty's verification mechanism.

In January this year, the Geophysical Institute of Israel conducted in Israel an infrasound calibration experiment for the IMS stations, which was funded by the IDC. The experiment was followed by an international workshop organized by the Israel Atomic Energy Commission with the support of the PTS and IDC staff. We would like to thank the PTS and the IDC for their support of these important activities.

I would also like to thank the Executive Secretary of the PTS, Ambassador Toth, for his visit to Israel in November 2010. Ambassador Toth visited the Israeli NDC and held meetings with high-ranking Ministers, in which Israel's positions regarding the CTBT were presented and discussed in detail.

Mr. President,

Israel has always maintained that nuclear issues, as well as all other security issues, could only be realistically addressed within the regional context. It is our vision and policy to support, and wherever possible, to join those arms control and other international treaties that do not detract from Israel's uniquely narrow overall security margins in its region.

In recent years, the international community has witnessed growing threats and challenges to the non-proliferation regime from within the Middle East region besides alarming calls by some in the region against the very existence of the State of Israel. Notwithstanding current political realities in the Middle East, Israel has continued to contribute to global non-proliferation, through its policy of responsible behavior and restraint in the nuclear domain.

Mr. President,

Israel's approach towards ratification of the CTBT is guided, inter alia, by the following considerations:

- The level of readiness of the verification regime of the Treaty, especially that of the OSI and its immunity to abuse;
- Israel's sovereign equality status in the policy making organs of the Treaty, including those related to the geographical region of the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) and in the Executive Council of the future CTBTO and,
- The adherence to and compliance with the CTBT by states in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Since the last Conference, major progress has been registered on the road to entry into force. The credit should go to all those who contributed to it. Yet, we shall all see to it that our mission is fully completed as designed in the Treaty. Israel pledges its cooperation and assistance to realize our common goal.

Thank you, Mr. President.