

STATEMENT BY NIGERIA ON AGENDA ITEM 11:
GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BY RATIFIERS AND
SIGNATORIES ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO
FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-
BAN TREATY (CTBT)

***AT THE CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO
FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN
TREATY, VIENNA, 3-5 SEPTEMBER 2003***

Mr. President

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you upon your election as the President of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban-Treaty (Article XIV). We are confident that under your guidance and diplomatic skill, this Conference would achieve its objectives. I assure you of our support as you carry out your arduous responsibility.

Mr. President

I wish to express my appreciation to the United Nations Secretary General for convening this Conference and to thank Mr. Wolfgang Hoffman and the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) for their tireless effort towards ensuring the early entry into force of the Treaty. I also wish to express my appreciation to Ambassador Tom Gronberg of Finland for the way and manner he conducted the informal consultations that produced the draft Final Declaration for this Conference.

Mr. President

Permit me to recall the anguish days of the cold war when the world longed for relief from the threat of nuclear war and mass annihilation generated by the rivalry between nuclear power states. The search for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, which began in earnest with the formation of the United Nations reached its glorious moments, first with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and with the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) in 1996.

Since the end of the cold war, one of the most important challenges facing the international community is the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The CTBT constitutes the main pillar sustaining the nuclear non-proliferation and the disarmament regime of the NPT. Its provisions envisage pragmatic and concrete measures aimed at attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world. In addition, the NPT Review Conference in 2000 recognized in Article VI that the CTBT was the practical step towards development of the global verification regime to monitor compliance with the Treaty.

However, seven years since its adoption, and in spite of the progress made with the ratification by 168 countries, the Treaty has not entered into force. This is due to non-ratification by twelve (12) of the forty-four (44) states listed in Annex II of the Treaty. The cheering news of the ratification by Algeria, one of the countries on that list, has given hope that other will reconsider their position and ratify the Treaty for the sake of humanity and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. President

Nigeria is firmly committed to the policy of nuclear non-proliferation and would continue to pursue the goal of general and complete disarmament. We have taken a principled stand on nuclear tests in general and in Africa in particular. This was why Nigeria was the second country globally, to ratify the NPT and our early ratification of the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (The Pelindaba Treaty) was a testimony to our well-known commitment to the building of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Nigeria believes that the CTBT provides a credible framework for securing the world from the threat of nuclear weapon. It is in this context, that we support the main objective of the Treaty, namely, the total prohibition of nuclear explosion and commend the PTS for the development of global infrastructure for the verification regime. We welcome the emerging profile of the international cooperation programme as a vehicle for promoting the Treaty. The programme has supported the build-up of international monitoring stations, facility agreements and concluding signatures and ratifications.

The number of delegations and the NGOs attending this Conference attests to the universal recognition of the CTBT as a veritable mechanism for the prohibition of nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. Nigeria is prepared to cooperate with the PTS to achieve the early entry into force of the Treaty.

Mr. President

This Conference offers a unique opportunity for States Signatories, non-States Signatories and Ratifiers to re-invigorate the Treaty through practical commitments. We recognize the difficulties some delegations, especially those from the developing countries face in their attempt to sign or ratify the Treaty or even participate in the activities of the Treaty. However, for the twelve (12) of the forty-four (44) states mentioned in Annex II, whose ratification is required for the entry into force of the Treaty, my delegation would like to urge them to make efforts to sign or ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. On her part, Nigeria shall continue to support any initiative that will facilitate the early into force of the Treaty.

Mr. President

Our hope and expectation is that at the end of this Conference, our collective decision would contribute to the ongoing efforts to fully realize the objectives of this Treaty. In this regard, we support the draft Final Declaration of the Conference, which calls for the early entry into force of the Treaty and its universal application to ban nuclear tests.

I thank you.