

STATEMENT BY MR. DHANAPALA

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE JOINT MINISTERIAL
STATEMENT ON THE CTBT**

14 September 2002
United Nations Headquarters

I welcome the launching of the joint ministerial statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The drafters of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty recognized in the words of its Preamble that the Treaty constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and therefore contributes to the enhancement of international peace and security.

The Treaty has long been regarded as the litmus test of commitment to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and one of the key steps for the systematic and progressive efforts toward nuclear disarmament.

By signing the Treaty in 1996, States showed their determination to put an end to over 50 years of nuclear testing—a period that witnessed over 2000 test explosions.

Since the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT convened in New York in November 2001, the number of signatures and ratifications has increased steadily. As of today it has been signed by 165 States, 94 of which have ratified the Treaty.

As you know the treaty names 44 States whose ratifications are essential for the Treaty to enter into force, 31 States have already done so.

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as depositary of the Treaty, consistently appealed to all States that have to sign or ratify the Treaty to do so, in order that this important norm against nuclear proliferation and further development of nuclear weapons will become operational.

In his address to the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in November 2001, the Secretary-General stated: “This Treaty is a crucial element in the non-proliferation regime. The longer we delay the entry into force of the CTBT, the greater the risk that nuclear testing will resume and that, in turn would make non-proliferation much harder to sustain.”

Today more than ever there is a need to jointly consolidate and build upon existing disarmament and non-proliferation agreements and to collectively commit to multilateral cooperation as an important means of pursuing and achieving our common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.