

Statement by the Executive Secretary
of the Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
Mr Tibor Tóth

Agenda item 108 (s): Cooperation between the United Nations and
the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-
Ban Treaty Organization

20 October 2006

Madam President,

1. I am pleased to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The promise of this Treaty, as one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, is the total ban of any nuclear explosion in any environment. My address to the General Assembly coincides, however, with a disquieting situation that is a strong reminder of the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
2. The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had conducted a nuclear test on 9 October 2006 resulted in global expressions of concern and condemnation with regard to this irresponsible act. Such a strong reaction of the international community is important and encouraging. It demonstrates how much the international community cares about the nuclear test ban.
3. On the occasion of a Special Session of the Preparatory Commission on 13 October 2006, the States Signatories expressed their deep concern and regret over the test. I share those sentiments. Such an action goes against the letter and spirit of the CTBT, which I continue to hope the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will sign and ratify. The demonstrated support for the Treaty highlights the commitment of the international community to establishing a universal and verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban.
4. The announcement not only meant that the global moratorium on nuclear tests that had been observed since 1998 was presumably broken. It also put our organization in the very sharp focus of attention. It was a test for our organization, our technical capabilities, our own procedures and the potential value that our global verification system can bring to States Signatories. In the Special Session, States Signatories expressed appreciation for the speedy provision of reliable and valuable data by the Provisional Technical Secretariat. As regrettable and disquieting as this new situation may appear, it is my hope that it will serve to refocus the attention of the international community on the relevance of the CTBT as a key disarmament and non-proliferation instrument and to underscore the urgency of bringing the Treaty into force and to complete the build-up of the CTBT verification system.

Madam President,

5. The main activities of the Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat in the past ten years have been the promotion of entry into force and establishment of the verification regime stipulated by the CTBT. There is significant progress to report concerning both.
6. To date, the Treaty has been signed by 176 States, 135 of which have already ratified it. The ratifying States include 34 of the 44 States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. Since the last report made to the General Assembly two years ago, 3 States have signed and 16 States have ratified the Treaty.
7. In September 2005, 117 States participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, with 40 States being represented by their Ministers or Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was successful in producing a robust Final Declaration, in which the ratifying States agreed that they would spare no efforts and use all avenues open to them to encourage further signature and ratification of the Treaty. This was followed on 20 September 2006 by a ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT, in which representatives of 61 States, including 22 Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, participated. The joint ministerial statement, which was welcomed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reaffirmed full support for the objectives of the CTBT and the work of the Commission. I would like to express my thanks for these and the many other initiatives in support of the Treaty's entry into force.

Madam President,

8. The Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission was mandated to establish an International Monitoring System consisting of 321 monitoring stations in four technologies. Seismic, infrasound and hydroacoustic stations are registering energy propagated through the earth, through the atmosphere and through the oceans. The radionuclide technology allows the analysis of radioactive particles filtered from air samples, and half of these radionuclide monitoring stations will also register minute quantities of noble gases present in the atmosphere. The geographical distribution of the stations allows for complete global coverage by the system and, if I may add, includes some rather difficult locations in which to build and operate these stations. It is the combination of these four technologies that should ultimately allow Member States of the CTBT to make an informed judgement about events registered by our system. To date, nearly 190 stations are already providing data through the Global Communication Infrastructure to the International Data Centre, distributing data products to 780 institutions in 93 States Signatories.
9. The CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional benefits derived from the data of our monitoring stations and the activities of the International Data Centre. Our data can be used in a variety of fields, including studies of the earth's structure as well as for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, underwater explosion location, and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. During the past year, the Preparatory Commission has continued the discussion about the potential contribution of data from the International Monitoring System, in particular in the context of tsunami warning. I am confident that the Preparatory Commission will soon approve a mandate to provide tsunami warning organizations with relevant data on a continuous and real time basis. While we are mindful of the primary purpose of our verification system, we hope to be able to develop further these important synergies between the unique CTBTO capabilities and the scientific community for the benefit of all.
10. I wish now to highlight the participatory approach of our activities. Altogether 90 countries are hosting stations of our monitoring system, thus contributing to the verification capabilities. The benefits are shared with all since data are made available in real time to all. The Preparatory Commission provides hardware and software coupled with intensive capacity building efforts with the aim to further enhance the ability of States Signatories to make the utmost use of this unprecedented participatory data sharing arrangement.
11. The Preparatory Commission continues to organize training programmes and workshops to support the enhancement of national capabilities of States Signatories in the implementation of the Treaty. These include training courses for station operators and for managers and technical staff of National Data Centres, on data analysis, storage and management, on the Global Communications Infrastructure and on technologies for use in on-site inspections. In the field of international cooperation the Provisional Technical Secretariat continues its role as an information clearing house and provides support for the advancement of the Commission's work. These extensive outreach activities increase the support for and the participation in the work of the Commission, as well as serving to advance national implementation of the Treaty.

Madam President,

12. Following the adoption on 15 June 2000 by the General Assembly of the Agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, our relations and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies have intensified. Cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA), including the three Regional Centres, is of particular importance to the Commission and I would like to use this opportunity to thank the DDA for its dedicated work.

A service agreement which the Commission concluded with the UNDP provides us with operational support. The WMO is receiving data from the monitoring system for research purposes. Potential fields for cooperation are being explored with other organizations of the United Nations system. I would also like to highlight the growing cooperation with UNESCO in relation to our provision of data for tsunami warning purposes.

13. In order to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family, the Preparatory Commission requested full membership in the United Nations system's Chief Executive Board (CEB). This would not only allow for strengthened cooperation and synergies, but it would also provide this body with essential expertise in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

14. I would like to close, Madam President, with a personal remark. The CTBT's *raison d'être* is to establish a legally binding norm against nuclear testing and to set up a credible system to verify compliance with this norm. Verification of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements is always difficult, slow and costly, but at the same time it is an important and worthwhile enterprise. I would like to thank all States who are supporting the build-up of our verification system technically, financially and politically. We will continue to do our utmost to live up to the high expectations in our monitoring capabilities. However, ultimately all our work and, in particular, the sophisticated verification regime will only prove their worth once the CTBT has entered into force. It is for those States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT whose ratification is necessary for entry into force to consider the value of the Treaty both for their national security and for international security. The reliable performance of the verification regime and the example of a growing number of ratifiers should, I hope, help them reach a positive decision.

Thank you, Madam President.