



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

**8<sup>th</sup> CTBT Ministerial Meeting (New York, 21 September 2016)**

**Italy**

Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me express Italy's appreciation to the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for convening this meeting, in cooperation with the Co-Presidents of the Article XIV Conference, the United Nations and the Organisation of the CTBT (CTBTO), and confirm our full support in this endeavour. We also commend the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, Dr. Lassina Zerbo, for his tireless work in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty.

While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the European Union and with the Joint Ministerial Statement we have endorsed, I would like to offer some remarks on a national basis.

Mr. Chairman,

In the year of the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signature**, this Meeting gives us the opportunity to raise, once again, the attention of the international community towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The CTBT is a major building block of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, as well as a strategic priority for Italy.

Pursuing the complete ban on nuclear tests is a crucial step for the elimination of nuclear weapons and, as such, is a way to pursue a stronger security for all. In this regard, we commend the **progress made in the universalisation of the Treaty** since the VII Ministerial Meeting in 2014, with 3 new Ratifying States (Angola, Swaziland and Myanmar), and we warmly welcome the ample participation (with more than 120 delegations) in the **Ministerial Preparatory Commission Meeting held in June**.

While welcoming these positive developments, we deeply regret and condemn the two **nuclear tests conducted by the People's Democratic Republic of Korea this year**. The DPRK is the only State to have conducted nuclear explosive tests in the

21<sup>st</sup> century. Such provocative actions represent a clear violation of several UN Security Council Resolutions and a serious threat to international peace and security.

We reiterate our call on the DPRK to abandon immediately the development of its **nuclear and ballistic missile programmes** in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, and to sign and ratify without delay the CTBT. Furthermore, we urge Pyongyang to return at an early date to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency's Safeguards.

Italy regrets that **the CTBT has not entered into force yet**, after 20 years from its opening for signature. In this regard, we call for a **prompt signature and ratification of the Treaty** by those States that have not done so, in particular by the remaining eight Annex-2 States.

Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the **voluntary moratoria on nuclear test explosions** represent a *de facto* international norm. Such moratoria should be a first step towards the accession to the Treaty. We thus call on all States to respect such *de facto* norm, and refrain from any action that would defeat the objective and the purpose of the Treaty awaiting its entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

Thanks to the hard work of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, and pending the entry into force of the Treaty, an **International Monitoring System (IMS)** and an **International Data Centre** were set up and are now well functioning.

The effectiveness and reliable performance of the CTBT verification regime facilitated the **prompt reaction of the international community to the illicit acts carried out by the DPRK** earlier this year. We do hope that further progress can be achieved, and a participatory and non-discriminatory **verification system** can be enforced.

On a **national level**, Italy is committed to the full implementation of the CTBT provisions and is concretely participating in the establishment of the IMS with an accredited seismic station and a laboratory for the analysis of radionuclides. Moreover, Italy is finalising the offer of an additional seismic station as a **National Cooperating Facility** at the disposal of the CTBTO, in order to further increase the scope of the CTBT monitoring system.

Italy has also provided **contributions** to the CTBTO for more than € 4.4 million in 2016.

Thank you, Co-Presidents.