



History and mechanism of the Article XIV Conferences

by Dr Andrea Wurm

weapons programme, big or small, has to be aware of the consequences if the door to nuclear testing remains open. In particular, each and every country that has yet to sign or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should realize that each additional signature or ratification adds to the Treaty becoming an international norm, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes to a safer and more secure world. The 2007 Conference should call upon these States to shoulder their responsibility and take the next step.

Let me conclude with a quote from the report “Weapons of Terror, Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms” from the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission chaired by Hans Blix:

“The single most hopeful step to revitalize non-proliferation and disarmament today would be ratification of the CTBT by all states that have nuclear weapons.”

I could not agree more. ■

Biographical note



Following the 2003 Article XIV Conference, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker was appointed Special Representative of the Ratifying States to promote the entry into force of the CTBT.

Between 1994 and 1997, he was Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. In this capacity, he chaired the CTBT negotiations and led them to a successful conclusion. ■

The fifth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will be held 17-18 September 2007 at the Hofburg in Vienna. High level representatives of States that have already ratified the Treaty will examine how the ratification process can be accelerated and decide which measures may be undertaken to facilitate the early entry into force of the CTBT.

The Conference, widely known as the Article XIV Conference, is named after Article XIV of the CTBT that specifies the conditions for the Treaty’s entry into force. Entry into force of the Treaty will take place 180 days after the 44 States that possessed nuclear reactors or research reactors at the time of the negotiations have ratified it. The negotiators of the CTBT also included a mechanism under Article XIV whereby regular conferences were to be convened if entry into force had not taken place three years after the anniversary of the Treaty’s opening for signature.

So far, this mechanism has resulted in four Article XIV Conferences. The United Nations Secretary-General, in his capacity as Depository of the Treaty, convened them at the request of a majority of Ratifying States. Signatory States, non-signatory States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations were invited to attend as observers.

The first Article XIV Conference was held 6-8 October 1999 in Vienna. Ninety-two Ratifying States and States Signatories adopted a Final Declaration calling upon all States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty. Japan was selected “to promote cooperation to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty, through informal consultations with all interested countries.”

A second such Conference took place 25-27 September 2001 in New York, with 109 States participating. The Final Declaration was formulated in the same fashion as in 1999 and Mexico was selected as the coordinating State.

The third conference took place 3-5 September 2003 in Vienna, with 102 States attending. The Final Declaration stressed the importance of a universal and effectively verifiable comprehensive Treaty as a major instrument in all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For the first time, the Conference adopted twelve specific measures, appended to its Final Declaration. One of them was the decision to appoint Ambassador Jaap Ramaker as a Special Representative to assist the coordinating State Finland in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty.

One hundred and seventeen States participated in the 2005 Conference, held 21-23 September at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Nearly 40 States were represented by their Ministers or Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The States Parties agreed that they would spare no efforts and use all avenues open to them to encourage further signature and ratification of the Treaty. The Conference reconfirmed the measures adopted at the 2003 Conference and decided that the Special Representative would continue to assist the coordinating State – Australia – in promoting the Treaty’s entry into force.

The upcoming Article XIV Conference will be co-chaired by Austria and Costa Rica. It will provide another opportunity to move the issue of early entry into force of the CTBT to the forefront of Governments’ agendas. The rising number of signatures and ratifications in the period before and after each Conference has previously shown how effective the Article XIV mechanism is. It is to be hoped that the momentum generated by the fifth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT once again translates into further signatures and ratifications, thus strengthening the norm against nuclear test explosions. ■

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