



Editorial



This September, one hundred and two States Signatories and five other States came together to participate in the 2003 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference), many of them at ministerial or Secretary of State level. The Conference took place in Vienna from 3 to 5 September, and underlined clearly the international community's strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). At the time of writing, 170 States have signed and 108 have ratified the Treaty.

In her opening address to the Conference, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, stated that the Conference could not have come at a more appropriate moment: "The issue of weapons of mass destruction dominates the international agenda and is a major ingredient of some of the most dangerous crises the world is facing today. The prevention of proliferation and of testing of such weapons therefore is of the utmost urgency." Clearly, many governments and citizens are concerned about international developments since the 2001 Article XIV Conference. This concern is also reflected by the large number of non-governmental organizations and media representatives who attended the Conference. Their participation is an indication of the Treaty's relevance, and of the worldwide interest in nuclear non-proliferation and global security.

This issue of CTBTO Spectrum looks at the results of the Article XIV Conference. The cover story by Ambassador Yukio Takasu provides a Member State's view of the Conference. As an overarching theme, this issue focuses on the benefits of signing the Treaty, both political and those deriving from the potential civil and scientific applications of the verification technologies. An interview with Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and a special feature article by Hein Haak, a Dutch infrasound expert, concentrate on this theme. As usual, we include an overview of the Commission's work over the past six months, including an update on the latest session of the Preparatory Commission.

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Results of the Article XIV Conference

The 2003 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty concluded on 5 September in Vienna. Delegates adopted a Final Declaration that stressed the importance of a universal and effectively verifiable comprehensive Treaty as a major instrument of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. "The prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the most important challenges facing the world", the Final Declaration stated. States participating in the Conference reaffirmed that "the CTBT has an essential role to play in strengthening global peace and security."

For the first time in its history, the Conference adopted an action plan with twelve specific practical measures to promote entry into force, appended to the Final Declaration. These include, *inter alia*, promoting understanding of the Treaty and demonstrating the benefits of the civil and scientific applications of the verification technologies, organizing regional seminars in order to increase awareness of the important role of the Treaty, and providing legal assistance on implementation measures and on national ratification processes. The Provisional Technical Secretariat is requested to act as a 'focal point' where information about activities undertaken by States Signatories is collected.

Further consultations on the implementation of the action plan will be held at a special meeting of States Signatories which takes place on 24 November 2003. ■