

# In the spotlight

## Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, H.E. Benita Ferrero-Waldner

**Q:** *One hundred and two States Signatories and five other States participated in the 2003 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference) in Vienna on 3-5 September. The Conference reaffirmed the international community's strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its essential role in strengthening global peace and security.*



H.E. BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, ADDRESSES THE 2003 ARTICLE XIV CONFERENCE, 3 SEPTEMBER 2003

*In your view, what are the main political achievements of the Conference?*

**A:** In my view, the 2003 Article XIV Conference has been very successful. The participation of 107 States, including many on ministerial level, 70 of which delivered a statement in the general debate, bore witness to the high importance many States continue to attach to the CTBT and its entry into force. Delegations left no doubt about their unwavering commitment to the Treaty and made clear that the CTBT contributes significantly to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, as in 1999 and 2001, a number of countries have accelerated their ratification processes. As a result, the number of signatures and

ratifications has steadily increased. In this respect, I was very pleased to note the ratification by Algeria in July, 2003 which was the first ratification by an Annex 2 State since February 2001.

**Q:** *Many participants during the Conference expressed fears that further delay in the CTBT's entry into force could lead to a resumption of nuclear testing.*

*How do you see the prospects of early entry into force of the CTBT in the context of the steps outlined in the Article XIV Conference Final Declaration?*

**A:** In the Final Declaration we reaffirmed our strong determination to undertake all measures consistent with international law to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty. The practical steps foreseen in the Final Declaration contain all conceivable elements to gradually increase the number of signatures and ratifications. Looking at the prospects of the entry into force of the CTBT, we should bear in mind that in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation it

that already 107 States have ratified the Treaty gives rise to optimism. Among those who have not ratified or signed the CTBT, there are some who face technical and logistic problems and others who still harbour doubts about the political merits of the Treaty. With regard to the first group of States, we must facilitate technical and legal assistance through the inter-sessional Coordinator, the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) or the Special Representative, if appointed by ratifying States, to promote the ratification process. As regards the other States, we need to increase our efforts to raise awareness of the importance of the CTBT and use bilateral meetings, multilateral fora and various outreach activities to this end. This is a difficult task, but I am convinced that if we continue to join forces, we will succeed in bringing the CTBT into force.

**Q:** *Much attention at the 2003 Article XIV Conference focused on the various forms of benefits of the CTBT.*

*In your view, what are the main political benefits of joining the CTBT?*

**“Looking at the prospects of the entry into force of the CTBT, we should bear in mind that in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation it normally takes many years until international treaties are accepted by a significant number of countries.”**

normally takes many years until international treaties are accepted by a significant number of countries. The fact

**A:** In the past months, the issue of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular of nuclear



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weapons, has gained enormous importance and ranks high on the international agenda. The CTBT, which bans all nuclear explosions for civil and military purposes, is an essential element on the long way towards a nuclear-weapon free world which will make this planet much safer than it is now. The CTBT curbs the qualitative nuclear arms race, builds confidence and enhances international peace and security. As it was highlighted in a seminar held at the margins of the 2003 Article XIV Conference, the verification system of the CTBT also offers numerous benefits for civil and scientific applications, especially in the areas of environment and earth science.

**Q:** *In your speech at the opening of the 2003 Article XIV Conference you were encouraging delegates “to work towards a world that finally does not need any more Conferences on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT.”*

*How does Austria, as the host country, regard its role in supporting moves towards entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty?*

**A:** Let me take this opportunity to reiterate that, while we follow impatiently the ratification process, we commend the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and the PTS for the excellent work they are doing in

achieving the entry into force of the Treaty and in setting up the international verification system. In my many bilateral and multilateral contacts, I regularly raise, where feasible and applicable,

the issue of CTBT signature and ratification. I have also instructed our Ambassadors and other senior officials in my Ministry to do likewise on their level. In the NPT process, Austria stresses the strong link between the NPT and the CTBT, as testified by the inclusion of the early entry into force of the CTBT into the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to implement nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. At the 2003 Article XIV Conference, Austria supported the suggestion of establishing

a trust fund to finance inter-sessional activities promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty. In order to give the trust fund a good start, and as an incentive for other possible donors, Austria pledged the amount of € 10.000 to the fund which ratifying States will consider to establish. ■

### Biographical note



*H.E. Benita Ferrero-Waldner is the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria. Ms Ferrero-Waldner holds a doctoral degree in law from the University of Salzburg. She joined the diplomatic service in 1984.*

*Besides working in various departments at the Foreign Ministry in Vienna, Ms Ferrero-Waldner also served between 1986 and 1993 as First Secretary at the Austrian Mission in Senegal and as Counsellor for Economic Affairs and Deputy Chief of the Austrian Mission in France. In 1994, she was appointed Chief of Protocol in the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary General. In May 1995 she took up her assignment as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Austrian government. She has held the position of Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs since February 2000. ■*

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