



## Editorial



*The steady stream of countries joining the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) since its opening for signature in September 1996 confirms the growing commitment*

*by the international community to the norm against nuclear test explosions.*

*As of 6 December 2004, a total of 174 States have signed the Treaty and 120 States have ratified it, including 33 of the 44 States listed in its Annex 2, whose ratification is required for entry into force. The CTBT has often been described as a cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. But regional nuclear non-proliferation regimes also play an important role in complementing the global regime. This issue of CTBTO Spectrum focuses on the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) geographical region and the CTBT. It is the first issue in a series which will be covering all six Treaty-defined regions.*

*With 33 Member States, LAC is a key player in regional nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The LAC region's commitment in this respect is embodied in the participation of all its Member States in the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The LAC region has always played an important role in contributing towards ensuring the entry into force and universality of the CTBT. When the Treaty opened for signature in 1996, 21 LAC States signed it. In the meantime, the number of signatures has increased to 27, with 20 LAC countries having also ratified the CTBT as of 6 December 2004.*

*The Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) has initiated a number of bilateral*

*and multilateral activities to enhance understanding of the Treaty in the region and to advance national implementation of the CTBT. At the same time, the PTS continues the timely build-up of the verification regime in the region, mastering considerable logistical and engineering challenges. Altogether 49 International Monitoring System (IMS) facilities are located in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nineteen of those have already been installed or upgraded and are currently under testing, including two radionuclide laboratories. About six additional stations are under contract negotiation, while the number of certified facilities meeting the technical specifications of the Commission stands at fifteen.*

*Besides looking at the many interactions between the LAC region and the CTBT, this issue of CTBTO Spectrum provides an overview of the Commission's work over the past six months, including an update on the latest session of the Preparatory Commission and a profile of the newly elected Executive Secretary. The cover story by Dr Avi Shapira gives an example of how the scientific community can make use of data deriving from CTBT verification technologies. Finally, an interview with Péricles G. Alves, Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament in Lima, Peru, and a special feature article by Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, Chairman of the First Committee*

*of the 59th General Assembly, provides new insight into both the historic and the current role of the LAC region in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.*

*In concluding, I would like to quote one of the many voices in the region that continue to express their support for the CTBT and the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Ambassador Paulette Bethel, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), stated at the April 2004 session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT):*

*"The elimination of the testing of nuclear weapons remains a critical element in the overall process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. To this end, CARICOM States call for a renewed commitment to promoting the entry into force and the implementation of both the letter and the spirit of the CTBT... Without real commitments to progressively eliminate nuclear arsenals, and prevent the proliferation of nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes, we run the risk of nullifying all of the commitments that we as Member States have made over the previous decade for social, economic and human development. That risk, combined with the continuing menace of nuclear conflagration, is unacceptably high."*

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