

Latin America and the Caribbean and the CTBT

Latin America and the Caribbean have a distinguished record in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This column examines the role played by the region in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.

In accordance with Article II, paragraph 28, of the CTBT, States Parties to the Treaty are divided into six geographical regions for the purpose of electing the members of the Executive Council of the CTBTO once the Treaty enters into force. Latin American and Caribbean States will designate nine of the 51 seats on the

Executive Council for election by the Conference of the States Parties. Annex 1 to the Treaty lists the 33 States comprising the region:

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Of these, 27 had signed the CTBT and were hence members of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission by the end of November 2004. Instruments of ratification had been deposited by 20 of these Signatories. Among the 44 States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, whose ratification is a condition for its entry into force, six are from the region (underlined above). Five of these 'Annex 2 States' have already ratified the Treaty, making a significant contribution towards its entry into force.

Representatives of States from the region participate in all the activities of the Commission. The region has already provided three chairpersons to the Commission, the Permanent Representatives in Vienna of Brazil (1998), Mexico (2000), and Peru (2003). Several of the Commission's technical meetings have also been held in Latin America and the Caribbean States. These include a regional workshop on international cooperation, national implementation and ratification of the CTBT in Lima, Peru, in 2000, and a sub-regional workshop for the

“We, the Foreign Ministers who have issued this statement, reaffirm our support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would rid the world of nuclear weapons test explosions and would contribute to systematic and progressive reduction of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear proliferation.

“The CTBT is a major instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty was an integral part of the 1995 agreements by the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) allowing the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The early entry into force of the CTBT was recognized at the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT as a practical step to achieving NPT nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, and has also been reaffirmed as being of central importance by the UN General Assembly.

“We affirm that the CTBT will make an important contribution towards preventing the proliferation of materials, technologies and knowledge that can be used for nuclear weapons, one of the most important challenges the world is facing today. Thus, the entry into force of the Treaty, within the broader framework of multilateral arms control and non-proliferation efforts, is more urgent today than ever before...

“We appeal to all States to make maximum efforts to achieve a major step toward the early entry into force of the CTBT. On our part, we dedicate ourselves to realizing this goal.”

EXCERPTS FROM THE JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE CTBT RELEASED BY 42 FOREIGN MINISTERS ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2004 IN NEW YORK, FOLLOWING A MEETING CONVENED ON THE MARGINS OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. AS OF 1 NOVEMBER 2004, 65 STATES HAVE ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH THE STATEMENT.



UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK



Operations and Maintenance Workshop

Caribbean States on the same subject in Runaway Bay, Jamaica, in 2002.

Thirteen Latin American and Caribbean States host monitoring facilities forming part of the International Monitoring System (IMS). To date, the Commission has concluded formal IMS Facility Agreements with five of these States, namely Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Paraguay and Panama. With nine IMS facilities, Argentina has the highest number of facilities in the region, while Brazil and Chile host seven each. Several stations are located on remote and environmentally sensitive islands, such as the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador; Easter Island and Juan Fernández Island, Chile; and Socorro Island, Mexico.

As regards regional organizations, the Provisional Technical Secretariat maintains a close working relationship with the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament and with the Association of Caribbean States. In addition, on 18 September 2002, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission and the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) signed an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations at the seat of the Commission in Vienna. This agreement was the first relationship agreement concluded by the Commission with a regional organization, an acknowledgement of the historic commitment of Latin American and Caribbean States to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. ■

The Operations and Maintenance Workshop (O&M), held from 11-15 October 2004 in Baden, Austria, attracted the highest number

opportunity to organize discussion forums to enhance the communication between the PTS, station operators and NDC staff.



OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS, BADEN, AUSTRIA

of participants of all workshops organized by the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) so far. Two hundred and six attendees from 53 Member States (118 station operators or National Data Centre staff, 20 equipment provider representatives), 60 PTS staff and eight members of the External Review Team made this workshop on the provisional Operations and Maintenance a successful and memorable event.

The presentations and discussions focused on four themes: Station Operation and Management; Sustainability and Development; System Performance; and Training. They were held in parallel groups and wrapped up in daily plenary sessions. On the last day of the workshop, Dr Mike Berry, chairperson of the workshop, presented detailed summary comments in several areas, including communications, contracts, finances, maintenance, coordination, and tools and databases in O&M. The workshop also gave the

On the last day, 78 station certification certificates were presented in a ceremony to station operators, recognizing their important contribution to the effective functioning of the IMS network.

A final report of the workshop will be delivered to Working Group B in February 2005. ■



MR NORBERT OPIYO AKECH, KENYA, RECEIVES STATION CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATES FROM MR THOMAS HOFFMANN, CHIEF OF ACOUSTIC MONITORING SECTION (LEFT)