The role of the Special Representative in the Article XIV Conference process

By Ambassador Jaap Ramaker

From 21 to 23 September this year, 117 Signatories and Ratifying States of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), many of them at the Ministerial level, participated in the fourth Conference on Facilitating the entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Scheduled one week after the Millennium Summit, the Conference represented another opportunity for Governments to focus on one of the most burning issues of our time: nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

When opening the Conference, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his function as Depositary of the Treaty, said: “We meet at a time of heightened global anxiety about weapons of mass destruction – particularly nuclear weapons. It is our collective duty to promote and strengthen the various multilateral instruments which reduce the threat these weapons pose to us all.”

The CTBT, often referred to as a cornerstone in the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, is an important international instrument in this field. The mere fact that Governments get together every two years and discuss ways and means of how to accelerate the ratification process of the CTBT, has a merit of its own since it focuses Governments on this central issue. As a result of this focus, the number of signatures and ratifications rises in the period before and after each Conference. For example, this year one State signed and four ratified the Treaty between July and November.

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