

CTBTO Spectrum

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Who we are

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty bans all nuclear weapon test explosions. It opened for signature in New York on 24 September 1996 and enjoys worldwide support.

The CTBTO Preparatory Commission was established to carry out the necessary arrangements for the implementation of the Treaty and to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the State Parties to the Treaty after its entry into force. It consists of all States Signatories and the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

IMS: The pioneering years

In the early days of August 1997, I chaired the first meeting of the initial International Monitoring System (IMS) team. Some of our team members were seasoned veterans from the Geneva negotiations, but most of us were completely new to the Treaty and to the world of multilateral diplomacy. Coming from nine countries and very different backgrounds, we faced the daunting task of building the global IMS network of 321 stations and 16 laboratories within three years. At that time it was thought that the Treaty could get the number of ratifications needed for entry into force within three years, and the monitoring system had to be ready by then.

Before coming to Vienna, many of us assumed that a complex and challenging project like building the IMS would go through the normal phases of project development such as design, proof of concept, testing and implementation. The instructions from the governing bodies, however, made it very clear that the build up of the monitoring system had to start as rapidly as possible. Consequently, the IMS team initiated the construction of the stations according to the technical specifications approved by the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, while, at the same time, they had to develop many innovations, such as authentication and certification procedures and incorporate them into the commercially available equipment in all verification technologies.

This build-as-you-design phase was characteristic of the early years. Contrary to the optimism in Geneva, many stations of the 120 auxiliary seismic station network did not exist or were abysmally below the technical specifications. The majority of those already in existence were built by international consortia for scientific purposes with the support of local institutions. The IMS team had to forge numerous alliances and establish agreements with parent networks before being in a position to upgrade and connect these

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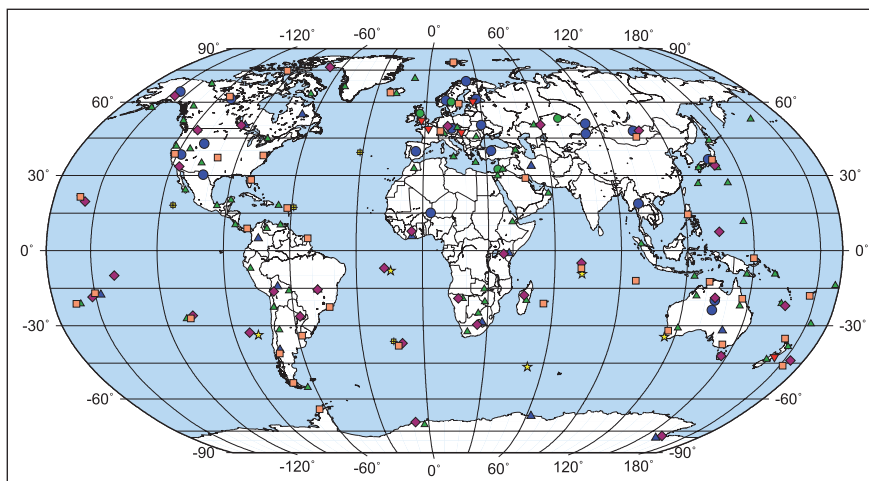
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IMS STATIONS IN IDC OPERATIONS AS OF 31 MAY 2006 (184 STATIONS)