



Editorial



In its ten years of existence, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has contributed significantly to international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts by creating an international norm against nuclear testing. This norm has been challenged by the announcement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that it had conducted a nuclear test on 9 October 2006.

The event represented a test for our organization, our technical capabilities, our own procedures and the potential value that the global verification system can bring to Member States. Within hours, States Signatories received reliable data and data products of the event, which was well-recorded throughout the world by the International Monitoring System (IMS) network. The delivery of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) showed that the verification system works in real life, with less than 60% of IMS stations contributing to provisional operations. At the same time, the event also underscored the need for a steady continuation of the build-up of the verification regime, including on-site inspections, as the ultimate means of verifying whether or not a nuclear test has taken place.

On 13 October 2006, the Member States held a Special Session of the Preparatory Commission, where they expressed their deep concern over the nuclear test announced by the DPRK and reinforced the commitment of the international community to establish a universal and verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban.

Ultimately, the work of the Preparatory Commission and its Secretariat will only

prove their worth once the CTBT has entered into force. With 177 signatures and 138 ratifications, the CTBT family is gradually and steadily growing towards universalization. All European countries have signed and ratified the Treaty. With the ratification of Moldova, the Eastern European Group is the first region to achieve full ratification. Also, all countries of the Treaty defined North American and Western Europe (NAWE) region, with one exception, have ratified the CTBT.

This issue of CTBTO Spectrum looks at the many interactions between the NAWE region and the CTBT, at the anniversary activities marking the adoption of the Treaty ten years ago, as well as at the achievements of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and future challenges. Several hundred participants listened to presentations of world-renowned scientists in the first scientific symposium organized by the PTS, which was held from 31 August to 1 September 2006 at the Hofburg in Vienna. Delegations and scientists engaged in a multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas and explored synergies between the global scientific community and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.

The symposium was followed by a two-day long experts meeting on civil and scientific applications of the CTBT verification technologies in Budapest, Hungary. Participants at this meeting discussed additional benefits deriving from the verification technologies and the need to validate the Member States' investment in the IMS network against the wider scientific community. In this context, I am particularly encouraged that the Commission, in its last session, has mandated the PTS to provide real time and continuous IMS data to relevant tsunami warning centres.

Besides providing an overview over the work of the Commission in the past half year, this issue of CTBTO Spectrum presents

articles by internationally acclaimed public figures and scientists. The PTS is particularly honoured to publish a brief statement by the new United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, an editorial by the European Union High Representative Dr Javier Solana, an interview with the British Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Dr Kim Howells and a cover article by Professor Paul Richards, a prominent seismologist at Columbia University.

In the field of potential civil and scientific applications of verification technologies, Dr Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, reports about the importance of PTS data for tsunami warning centres and Dr Yosef Bartov, Director of the Earth Science Research Administration in Israel, looks at nuclear explosion phenomenology from an on-site inspection perspective. Finally, the special feature article by the Executive Director of VERTIC, Mr Michael Crowley, provides an interesting analysis of ten years of CTBT, the achievements of the Commission and its Secretariat, as well as the challenges ahead.

The 9 October event has challenged the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, while at the same time, it has demonstrated the political importance of the Treaty. I hope that the reliable performance of the verification regime and the trend towards universalization will convince 'hold-out' States of the international security value of the CTBT and will encourage them to sign and ratify the Treaty for the benefit of a safer and more secure world.

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