

## **UK Ministerial intervention by Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Article XIV Conference**

### Entry into Force of the CTBT is a key disarmament and non-proliferation priority

23 September 2011

Mr President, honoured colleagues,

I am very honoured to represent the United Kingdom at this 7th Article XIV Conference, which falls on the 15 year anniversary of the Treaty opening for signature; and to reaffirm the United Kingdom's strong support for the CTBT.

The participation of so many Ministers and of the UN Secretary General testifies to the enduring support of the vast majority of the international community to put in place a legally binding ban on all nuclear weapon test explosions and indeed all nuclear explosions.

There are encouraging prospects for the Treaty's Entry into Force, as we have seen from a steadily growing number of countries signing and ratifying the Treaty, bringing us closer to universality.

On this note, we warmly welcome Guinea's recent ratification.

We also encourage Indonesia to continue its efforts towards ratification.

The May 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference final document reaffirmed the vital importance of the CTBT and its early entry into force. As the NPT action plan notes, ratification by all of the NPT-recognised nuclear-weapon states would have a hugely positive impact towards entry into force of the CTBT. We are therefore encouraged by the US Administration's undertaking to lay the necessary groundwork towards ratification and we urge China to follow suit.

Promoting Entry into Force of the CTBT is one of the United Kingdom's key disarmament and non-proliferation priorities. The UK strongly supports the continued development of the Treaty's global verification regime. We have provided experts to assist the CTBT Organisation with its efforts to establish a viable verification regime which is ready for entry in force.

The International Monitoring System provides not only a vital technical

backbone to the verification regime for the CTBT but, in connection with On-Site Inspections, also provides a wider deterrent against states believing they can clandestinely and qualitatively improve their nuclear weapons through nuclear test explosions or any other nuclear explosions.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the need to hold the Integrated Field Exercise scheduled for 2014, as this will play a central role in the development of the Treaty's on-site inspection regime, and serve as a major step towards building a capability to mount an inspection upon entry into force of the Treaty.

To further assist in the development of the On-Site Inspection regime, we look forward to co-hosting with the CTBTO an expert meeting in Edinburgh later this year together.

The versatility of the International Monitoring System was demonstrated following the Fukushima disaster, when it provided data to the IAEA on the movement of radioactive particles. In addition the system provides support to Tsunami early warning through the data it has provided. The United Kingdom supports this, and is open to exploring with international partners how we could broaden the application of CTBT data to other civil and scientific purposes.

The United Kingdom has been working hard not only to strengthen the CTBT regime, but to make concrete progress across the disarmament regime. We announced a number of significant disarmament measures in our 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review: reducing the number of warheads and missiles on our submarines and giving a new, stronger assurance to non-nuclear weapon states. On 29th June we announced that the programme for implementing these warhead reductions had commenced and at least one of our submarines now carries a maximum of 40 nuclear warheads.

All states should recognise and welcome the bilateral and multilateral progress that has been made in 2011. In February the New START Treaty entered into force, and at the end of June the five NPT-recognised nuclear weapon states took part in the P5 Conference in Paris. The meeting was a vital opportunity for the five nuclear weapon states to follow up on the 2010 NPT Review Conference and focus on concrete progress towards fulfilling our disarmament obligations. We were delighted that the Conference set in train a number of new initiatives on which the P5 will collaborate.

As part of the United Kingdom's efforts to make progress, we have been

working with Norway over the last four years on innovative and collaborative research into disarmament verification. This work is based on the principle that any future disarmament process would need to be underpinned by a verification regime that can demonstrate with confidence that nuclear disarmament has taken place. Our work with Norway has demonstrated that nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike are able to make an active contribution to disarmament through verification research, while still complying with their non-proliferation obligations.

The United Kingdom will host a confidential P5 expert-level meeting to discuss lessons learned from the UK and Norway's ground breaking work on the verification of nuclear warhead dismantlement. And, as announced earlier by the Norwegian Foreign Minister, we also now intend to share these important lessons with other non-nuclear weapon states. We look forward to hosting, in partnership with Norway, a technically focused workshop in London in early December 2011. This will enable us to share our progress with technical experts from non-nuclear weapon states that have expressed an interest in the research conducted to date. Others who share our vision of a world without nuclear weapons, and our commitment to the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, should also join renewed efforts to achieve entry into force of the CTBT.

I appeal to those few remaining Annex 2 countries to recognise the Treaty as a tangible opportunity to advance that cause, and to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. The United Kingdom stands ready to assist any Annex 2 country make the domestic case for ratification. Entry into Force of the CTBT would be a tangible step towards a safer and more stable world, one in which the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can become a reality, not only the wish of the United Kingdom, but I am sure, Mr President, of all present here today.

Thank you very much.

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