

Opening Remarks

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Preparatory Commission
for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

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Your Excellency the Vice-Chancellor of Austria, dear Michael,
Professor Garwin and Professor Strangway,
Executive Secretary Emeritus Hoffmann, dear Wolfgang,
Excellencies,
dear colleagues from the missions,
Colleagues from the Secretariat, former, present and future,
and dear friends,

In late August 2006, less than five years ago, this organization brought together for the first time in its existence a couple of hundred scientists on the top floor of this building to look for synergies with science up to and beyond 2006. Very few of us suspected that “beyond” would mean that by 2011 this initiative would grow into a scientific pilgrimage with around 800 participants and 350 scientific submissions and posters. A pilgrimage made possible in this amazing city, in its very heart, the Hofburg, by the generous political and financial support of Austria, for which I would like to express on behalf of all of us our most sincere appreciation, dear Michael.

I am personally humbled by the dedication of so many scientists so enthusiastically reacting to a renewed call to scientific arms. Your enthusiasm obliges me not just to announce how much we in the organization are looking forward to the scientific proceedings and discussions, presentations and poster sessions. It obliges me as well to report back to you how much this organization and its verification regime have progressed during the last half-decade or so since we launched this initiative.

I deliberately used the word “obliges” because only together with you and thanks to you, scientists, technologists, supporters and friends of this monitoring regime and this organization, were we able to get to where we are today. Thanks to you and together with you we have now reached an 80% build-up certification readiness of the system. Together with you we improved station design, especially in the infrasound technology, resulting in an increased data availability and detection capability. We developed an effective sustainment structure for the International Monitoring System (IMS) and an integrated database called DOTS. We completely overhauled the computer infrastructure, installed a new state of the art Computer Centre and Operations Centre, established a new Global Communications Infrastructure unprecedented in its global reach.

Together with you we migrated all verification related applications to an open source environment, established a system-wide state of health monitoring tool, refined and improved detection and analysis methods and algorithms for processing of data, improved the configuration of automatic processing pipelines and strengthened the interactive analyst capability. Together with you we initiated the re-engineering of the operating software of the International Data Centre (IDC), introduced infrasound automatic and interactive processing into routine operations, made important advances in data fusion capabilities, decreased the time lines for the production of the various IDC products, delivering them within time lines envisaged at the time of entry into force of the Treaty.

Together with you we installed nearly 70% of the noble gas systems, introduced noble gas data into routine operations, developed software to process these data, made significant advances in using atmospheric transport modelling to backtrack dispersed radioactive material. Together with you we carried out a successful on-site inspection (OSI) Integrated Field Exercise in Kazakhstan, trained the first group of OSI surrogate inspectors, established an Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility. Together with you we provided automated external access for States Signatories to our data and products, distributed the ‘NDC in a box’ software to States Signatories, created a new virtual Data Exploitation Centre (vDEC) for use by outside scientists.

And together with you we were weighed again and again. Weighed by system-wide performance tests, small scale tests and real time continuous performance monitoring. Weighed in

2006 and weighed in 2009 by the two announced nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Two tests too many. And we were tested by the forces of nature and man-made disaster. Tested by a most tragic earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident in Japan. Tested so many times during this half-decade and still standing firm in our resolve together with you, scientists, supporters and friends of this verification regime and this organization.

During the next three days we will be looking beyond 2011. I hope that in our continued joint venture we pledge to finish the build-up of this regime and this Treaty. We pledge to put in place its elements still missing. And since "good enough" is not good enough for us, we pledge to better whatever should be improved and to look over the horizon for improvements through technology foresight. We pledge to share widely the benefits of our unprecedented monitoring system through mass collaboration, education and capacity development. All the benefits of a system and a regime which are not possessed by any of us, but belonging to all of us.

The presence of two outstanding scientists is a great source of inspiration. Professor Strangway recalled the Apollo mission. As we pledge, hopefully together with you, scientists, supporters and friends of this regime, let us use a pledge made fifty years ago by a president who dared to dream of and deliver on the unthinkable of that time, to land a man on the Moon, a pledge which I have slightly altered:

"We choose to put this Treaty in place. We choose to put this Treaty in place in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too ..."