Highlights in 2015

Increase in capacity building activities
Integration of NDC capacity building with policy and educational outreach activities
Consolidation of all e-learning activities into a single knowledge and training portal

The Commission offers States Signatories training courses and workshops on technologies associated with the three pillars of the verification regime – the IMS, the IDC and OSI – as well as on political, diplomatic and legal aspects of the Treaty. These courses help to strengthen national scientific and decision making capabilities in relevant areas to assist in developing capacities in States Signatories to effectively confront the political, legal, technical and scientific challenges facing the Treaty and its verification regime.

In some cases, the Commission provides equipment to NDCs to increase their capacity to participate actively in the verification regime by accessing and analysing IMS data and IDC products. There is a need to update the knowledge and experience of national experts as technologies expand and improve.

Workshop on the operation and maintenance of the IMS, October 2015
By enhancing the technical capabilities of States Signatories, these activities empower all stakeholders to participate in implementation of the Treaty and to enjoy the civil and scientific benefits of its verification regime.

Training courses are held at the Commission headquarters in Vienna and at other locations, often with the assistance of hosting States. The capacity building programme is funded through the Regular Budget of the Commission and through voluntary contributions. All training activities have a well defined target group, offer detailed content, and are complemented by the educational platform and other outreach activities to the broader scientific community and civil society.

Capacity Building Activities

As part of its integrated capacity building approach, the Commission continued to expand its education and outreach activities in 2015.

The activities included 9 NDC training courses; 11 station operator training courses; 10 technology workshops and technical meetings; 2 NDC development workshops; 3 NDC sessions on the margins of the CTBT: Science and Technology 2015 conference; 7 donations of capacity building systems; 2 installations of capacity building systems; the purchase of 10 additional capacity building systems; and continued development of the extended NDC in a box.

As a part of the CTBT: Science and Technology 2015 conference, the fourth annual CTBT Academic Forum was held on 26 June. Organized with financial support from the EU, Norway and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, the Academic Forum was a results oriented, interactive event for academics already engaged in or interested in CTBT education.

Building on past sessions, the purpose of the 2015 Academic Forum was to identify ways to integrate CTBT related topics into existing policy or science based academic curricula and to develop educational resources to further this objective. Over 100 participants explored opportunities for academics to engage in studies related to the CTBT, such as joint research and the use of verification technologies and data for civil and scientific applications; legal and policy research opportunities related to the Treaty; and technology foresight. They also discussed how to share best practices in promoting CTBT education worldwide.

An integrated capacity building information booth at the CTBT: Science and Technology 2015 conference provided material and advice on CTBT related capacity
building, as well as the inspectorate development and training programme for on-site inspections.

With funding from the EU, the Commission launched a CTBT research fellowship initiative in early 2015. Following a competitive application process, a candidate was selected in April to conduct research with the objective of improving the learning experience of trainees participating in capacity building activities and to foster interdisciplinary cooperation with academia and CTBT related university courses. The research fellow submitted a final report with an assessment and recommendations in November.

The Commission hosted a component of the United Nations disarmament fellows programme in September 2015, including a series of presentations on the verification regime and an OSI tabletop exercise.

The OSI regional introductory course in Sri Lanka aimed to acquaint national technical experts and personnel from States Signatories with the CTBT and the OSI regime with the aim of broadening the pool of experts for participation in OSI related activities and to identify potential candidates for the roster of surrogate inspectors.

In keeping with the integrated capacity building approach, all e-learning activities were consolidated into a single knowledge and training portal in November 2015. The Commission also promoted online education and training material on the Treaty through its iTunes U site, which currently has 17 collections, including four seminar courses with more than 415 freely shareable files.

The site had over 2500 subscribers by the end of the year, with almost 16 000 visitors and over 18 000 downloads of content.

Preparations were made during 2015 for a symposium in early 2016 on Diplomacy and Science for Peace and Security: The CTBT@20. The symposium aimed to provide diplomats and representatives of national agencies with information on the Treaty and its verification regime, as well as to seek innovative solutions to achieving entry into force.