

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016

Symposium "Science and Diplomacy for Peace and Security: the CTBT@20"

Ministerial events in Vienna in June
"Art for a Nuclear Test Ban" initiative

On 24 September 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty opened for signature at the United Nations in New York. Within 24 hours, 71 countries had signed the Treaty, including all five nuclear weapon States.

This important step towards a world free of nuclear weapons followed decades of intense political negotiations as well as diligent scientific groundwork to establish not only the legal parameters of a global ban on nuclear tests, but also a robust independent and internationally controlled verification system.



Ministerial Meeting commemorating 20 years of the Treaty (Vienna).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Twenty years later, the CTBT is still not in force. Ratifications by eight remaining Annex 2 States are still pending, preventing the Treaty from achieving full legal standing. Nevertheless, with the signature and ratification of the Treaty by a significant number of States, a de facto international norm against nuclear testing has been established and a robust verification regime is in place to detect any nuclear test in any environment.

A number of events were launched in 2016 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Treaty and the establishment of the Commission. With nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in January and in September, the year also reminded the international community of the urgency of advancing the entry into force of the Treaty.

In January, the symposium "Science and Diplomacy for Peace and Security: the CTBT@20" brought together former negotiators of the CTBT; representatives of States, civil society and the media; and the newly launched CTBTO Youth Group. The Youth Group also

featured prominently in a panel discussion with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the VIC in April. At an event in Vienna in December, the Executive Secretary and the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs engaged with young people in person and online for a discussion on the Treaty.

The official highlight of the anniversary year was a high level Ministerial Meeting in June in Vienna at which States Signatories took stock of achievements, reaffirmed their commitment to the global test ban, reviewed challenges and presented proposals for future action.

In August, events were held in Astana, Kazakhstan; New York, United States of America; and Vienna, Austria, to mark the International Day Against Nuclear Tests and the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan.

The "Art for a Nuclear Test Ban" initiative was featured at several exhibits throughout the year, including during the launch of a dedicated United Nations stamp on 21 September in New York.

In September, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council issued a statement pledging to strive for ratification of the Treaty and prompt entry into force.

In a historical moment for the Treaty, the United Nations Security Council met on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the CTBT for a debate on the continuing relevance of the Treaty and the importance of pursuing its entry into force. The United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on the CTBT (S/RES/2310 (2016)) that was co-sponsored by 42 countries.

The 20th anniversary year also witnessed important advances in the build-up of the verification regime with several new IMS stations being installed or certified. This included the installation of the last remaining hydroacoustic station (HA4, Crozet Islands (France)) as well as the installation of radionuclide station RN24, Isla Santa Cruz, Galápagos, (Ecuador). In December, the first IMS station in China (RN21, Lanzhou) was certified, raising the prospects for further certifications in the country in 2017.



From top:
Round table discussion on the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty (Vienna).
United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (Vienna).
CTBTO Youth Group member at the #CTBT20 panel with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (Vienna).
"Science and Diplomacy for Peace and Security: the CTBT@20" (Vienna).
Art exhibition on the 2016 International Day against Nuclear Tests (Vienna).



