Every two years, the States that have ratified the Treaty convene a Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT (also known as an Article XIV conference). In the years between Article XIV conferences, foreign ministers of States Signatories are invited to meet on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. The aim of these Ministerial Meetings is to sustain and increase political momentum and public support for entry into force. To aid this, the ministers adopt and sign a joint statement that is open for adherence by other States. The initiative for these meetings was taken by Japan in cooperation with Australia and the Netherlands, which organized the first Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting in 2002.

The Treaty cannot enter into force until it has been ratified by the 44 States – listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty – that formally participated in the final stage of the negotiation of the Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in 1996 and possessed nuclear power reactors or nuclear research reactors at that time. Eight of these States have yet to ratify the Treaty, including three that have not signed it.
NEW YORK, 2016

The eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT was held on 21 September 2016 in New York. It was chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands, in cooperation with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, an Article XIV Co-President. The meeting was attended by the United Nations Secretary-General, as well as a large number of ministers and other senior officials from States Signatories.

The ministers adopted a joint ministerial statement, emphasizing that a nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT. The statement condemned the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and urged all remaining States to sign and ratify the Treaty. It also welcomed advances achieved in ensuring the robustness of the verification regime of the Treaty and its scientific and civil applications.

In his remarks, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recalled that “this year is the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty’s opening for signature. But this is not a celebration. It is a stark reminder of the work that remains”. He further added that “the Treaty’s failure to enter into force was unacceptable when I entered office in 2007”. Echoing the wish of the overwhelming majority of States, the Secretary-General urged the remaining States to act without delay and sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

The 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly provided an additional platform for the expression of support for and renewal of commitment to the Treaty. This was clearly manifested by the adoption of a resolution on the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/71/86), with 183 States voting in favour. The resolution urged all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, to sign and ratify it as soon as possible and underlined the need to maintain momentum towards completion of all elements of the verification regime. The resolution also stressed the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Treaty and noted the contributions of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting, the Article XIV process, the Group of Eminent Persons and the CTBTO Youth Group in promoting the Treaty.

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

On 15 September 2016, the Governments of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America issued a joint statement on the CTBT.

The sponsors of the joint statement pledged to strive for the early ratification and prompt entry into force of the Treaty and urged all States that have not done so to sign and ratify it. They reaffirmed their own moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending the entry into force of the Treaty and recognized that such a test would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT. They also called for all States
Signatories to support completion of the verification regime.

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THE CTBT

The United Nations Security Council held a landmark meeting on the CTBT on 23 September 2016, the eve of the 20th anniversary of its opening for signature.

Members of the Security Council seized the opportunity to express their positions on the Treaty and its entry into force. The significance of the Treaty and appreciation of the work of the Commission were a common theme in almost all statements delivered at the meeting.

Finally, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on the CTBT that was co-sponsored by 42 States (S/RES/2310 (2016)). The resolution stresses the vital importance and urgency of achieving entry into force of the Treaty and urges all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. It also calls on all States to refrain from conducting any nuclear explosions and to maintain their national moratoria. It emphasizes that such moratoria are an example of responsible international behaviour that contributes to international peace and security. However, the resolution stresses that such moratoria do not have the same permanent, legally binding effect as entry into force of the Treaty.

The resolution underlines the need to maintain momentum towards completion of all elements of the Treaty verification regime and calls upon all States to continue to support and strengthen it. It further states that the verification regime contributes to regional stability as a significant confidence building measure and strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

In its resolution, the United Nations Security Council invited the PTS to provide a report to all States Signatories within 180 days of the adoption of the resolution on the status of States Signatories assessed contributions to the Commission and any additional support provided by States Signatories for the completion of the verification regime and for the maintenance and operational needs for the IDC and IMS.

NEW RATIFICATIONS OF THE TREATY

Myanmar and Swaziland deposited their instruments of ratification on 21 September 2016. The number of ratifications of the Treaty now stands at 166. These new ratifications make the Treaty one of the most adhered to international instruments in the field of disarmament and drive us closer to the desired objective of universality.