

EDITORIAL

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A phenomenon occurs when more people ride bicycles or walk a city's streets: there are fewer accidents involving them, which leads to the hypothesis that there is safety in numbers. The proposition is well served by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Until 1996 when it opened for signature there had been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted. Since then there have been a handful, all by newcomers and all condemned by the UN Security Council.

The numbers speak for themselves: 182 States have signed the CTBT and 151 have ratified it. The Treaty is approaching universality. It is a matter of fact. There are few international treaties and legal agreements that enjoy such a commitment of support.

It remains of utmost importance that each and every one of the nine outstanding States takes steps to ratify the Treaty so that it can enter into force and consigns the nuclear testing era to the dustbin of history. That is truly my hope.

Nevertheless, this waypoint we've reached has been the consequence of every single signature, every single ratification by States over the past ten years, commitments entered into even in times of the most politically inclement weather. Bold, singular commitment is still required to stay the course by ratifying and signatory States alike.

Without a CTBT firmly in place, it will ultimately not be possible to move forward on other non-proliferation and disarmament measures. In May the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, an event held every five years, opens in New York. It gives the NPT's 189 Member States another opportunity to repeat afresh, and it needs to be part of the final outcome, the commitment they made in 2000 to bring the CTBT into early force.

The Treaty's virtue is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. To maintain the CTBT and have it flourish demands broad political support sustained by active participation.

Translated, this means engaging as many stakeholders as possible, stakeholders who have to be provided with the means to participate on an equal footing in implementing the Treaty as well as benefiting from its civil and scientific applications.

More than any other international arms control treaty, the CTBT relies on a unique and comprehensive verification regime driven by science and technology. The ability of many countries to participate in it is limited by its advanced technical nature. This is why we have embarked on a new initiative offering Member States the means to further develop the capabilities to have a more active role. The initiative will expand on the capacity building activities that already exist.

We are restructuring training activities, consolidating further courses and workshops, and increasing our focus on improved distance learning opportunities. In addition, we will expand our existing networks and seek open, flexible and tailor-made cooperation arrangements with potential partners from all parts of the world.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) – and I dare to say other non-proliferation and disarmament bodies – need a deeper pool from which to draw the experts they require to sustain the credibility of their verification arrangements.

The articles in this issue of Spectrum reflect the wealth of topics related to the CTBT and its verification regime. The President of the Marshall Islands and the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan both touch upon the devastating history of nuclear testing and how their countries have benefited from the CTBT. The Foreign Ministers of Australia and Mexico respectively explain their countries' strong commitment to a CTBT in force. The U.S. chief negotiator of the CTBT, Stephen Ledogar, expands on a number of key issues from the Treaty negotiations, which continue to be relevant for today's debate. On the verification side, themes span from how hydroacoustic data can be used to monitor whales and how developing countries benefit from capacity building activities, to recent developments in data mining and on-site inspection techniques.

Let me end by paying tribute to my dear friend and colleague Boris Kvk, director of the On-Site Inspection (OSI) Division from 2004-2010, who passed away in February. Boris was a beloved colleague, leading his division from a conceptual to a more practical approach. He will be greatly missed as a professional as well as a human being, by everyone at the CTBTO and in the wider non-proliferation and disarmament community of which Boris was an active member.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tibor Tóth', with a stylized flourish at the end.