



## AUSTRALIA

# Helping to achieve a world without nuclear weapons

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The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a long-standing non-proliferation and disarmament priority for Australia. It is a crucial building block towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Australia is proud to have played an instrumental role in the development of the CTBT, and to be at the forefront of efforts to promote its entry into force.

### WHY THE CTBT MATTERS

The CTBT, once brought into effect, will play a key role in the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. As noted by the recent International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) report, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats*, the CTBT "sets, in effect, a qualitative cap on the capacity of the existing nuclear weapons possessors and potential new ones to develop new nuclear weapons." In the five decades before the CTBT's conclusion in 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were conducted. There have been only a handful of tests since then, most recently those by North Korea in 2006 and 2009, with a number of those States that have not yet ratified the Treaty observing an informal moratorium on testing.

Such an important measure for international peace and security should not depend, however, on informal and voluntary observance. It needs to be reinforced by the legally binding effect and authority of the CTBT coming into force, and the complete implementation of its verification system. Australia believes entry into force of the CTBT would also reinforce and complement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), one of the key pillars of global stability and security. We support strongly the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty that would, as the ICNND report notes, set 'a quantitative cap' on the development of new nuclear weapons.

### AUSTRALIA'S CONTRIBUTION

Australia played an active and influential role in the negotiation of the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) from 1994 to 1996. When adoption of the Treaty was blocked in the CD, Australia led international action to take it to the United Nations in New York, where it was adopted by an overwhelming majority. Australia signed the CTBT on 24 September 1996 and ratified the Treaty on 9 July 1998. The strong international support for the CTBT is demonstrated by its 182 signatures and 151 ratifications. But to achieve universal application of the CTBT, it is vital to get over the line with ratification by the remaining nine Annex 2 States required to bring the Treaty into force.

Australia has warmly welcomed President Obama's commitment that the United States will move forward with ratification and work with others to bring the Treaty into force. Ratification by the United States would be a catalyst for others to act. But the responsibility to act rests not only with the United States. Other Annex 2 States also need to ratify.

Since the conclusion of the CTBT, Australia has vigorously promoted the Treaty's entry into force. Australia initiated the "Friends of the CTBT" Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2002, in cooperation with Japan and the

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Netherlands. In 2008, I was pleased to Chair a meeting of around 80 foreign ministers at the UN in New York, which reaffirmed the crucial importance of the CTBT and its entry into force.

For more than a decade, Australia, Mexico and New Zealand have sponsored a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling for the entry into force of the CTBT. In 2009, a breakthrough was achieved when, for the first time in nine years, all five permanent members of the Security Council voted for the resolution.

Australia has also led efforts in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT – the so-called Article XIV conference – and from 2005 to 2007 served as coordinator of international efforts to promote this objective. Australia will continue to promote the

critical importance of the CTBT to our neighbours in the Asia Pacific region. Australia has supported the CTBT through regional outreach programmes to promote ratification, most recently in workshops in Indonesia in November 2008 and in Palau in May 2009. I recently discussed with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization's (CTBTO) Executive Secretary, Tibor Tóth, how Australia can continue to encourage other nations in our region to sign and ratify the Treaty.

### AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE CTBT'S VERIFICATION SYSTEM

The establishment of the CTBT's verification system – including the International Monitoring System (IMS) – will be a challenging task.



Photo: Todd Vincent

**CTBTO OPERATION CENTRE**  
Australia's Foreign Minister Stephen Smith (left) and Tibor Tóth, CTBTO Executive Secretary (right) at the CTBTO headquarters in Vienna, 17 February 2010.



Infrasound station IS05  
Hobart, Australia

»... We regard the CTBT as one of the most fundamental steps the global community can take to reach the ultimate objective of the abolition of nuclear weapons.«

The CTBTO is to be congratulated for its efforts to date. But much work remains to be done, and it is important that States provide the necessary financial, technical and political support to the CTBTO. The IMS is a sensitive and highly reliable network of over 300 monitoring facilities. Australia will host 21 of these facilities, the third largest number in any country, after the United States and Russia.

Seventeen of Australia's facilities have already been installed, certified to CTBT standards and are sending data to the International Data Centre (IDC) in Vienna. Plans to install the remaining facilities are in hand. An Australian expert is chairing work to develop procedures for on-site inspections. In May 2010, Australia will host a workshop for regional countries to discuss the work of National Data Centres (NDC) under the CTBT. The workshop will aim both to promote the establishment of NDC capacity in Australia's region, and to help relevant States to complete ratification processes.

The benefits of the CTBTO's IMS are not limited to the detection of possible nuclear tests. Much of the data gathered can have valuable civil and scientific applications. The reliability, global coverage and near real-time

function of the IMS makes its data useful for disaster alert. On 12 September 2008, Australia signed an arrangement with the CTBTO under which data from IMS stations can be used by the Australian Tsunami Warning System. As I noted in a meeting with Executive Secretary Tóth on 17 February 2010, we regard the CTBT as one of the most fundamental steps the global community can take to reach the ultimate objective of the abolition of nuclear weapons.

I urge all States yet to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so at the earliest opportunity.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

##### STEPHEN SMITH

was sworn in as Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 2007. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Smith held a range of key shadow ministerial positions, including in the portfolios of Education and Training, Industry, Infrastructure and Industrial Relations, Health, Trade, Communications and Resources and Energy. From 1991 to 1992, he was Special Adviser to the Prime Minister and Senior Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer.