Leading by example

Indonesia’s ratification of the CTBT creates momentum for remaining countries to ratify

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On 6 December 2011, the Indonesian Parliament took a significant step towards the global prohibition of nuclear test explosions by ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)\(^1\). By doing so, Indonesia increased the number of States that have ratified the Treaty to 156. With eight more ratifications from Annex 2 countries, the Treaty will come into force. Like Indonesia, these remaining eight are significant technology holders and thus their ratifications are mandatory for the Treaty to enter into force — as was the case for Indonesia. We have therefore made a strong declaration of commitment to a world without nuclear weapons. We have also made a timely contribution to the fortunes of the Treaty.

The timing of this move could not be more propitious. It came right after Indonesia, as Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), successfully facilitated the conclusion of negotiations between ASEAN and nuclear weapon States (NWS) to enable the NWS to accede to the Protocol of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty.

**INSPIRING OTHER COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW SUIT**

This is no less than a double breakthrough for Indonesia and ASEAN. Aside from benefiting the entire Asian region, these two developments will create positive momentum that could push the remaining Annex 2 countries to start their ratification process and help promote the universalization of the Treaty. Indeed, Indonesia’s support for the Treaty and the vision of a world free from nuclear weapons is not something new. Indonesia affixed its name to the Treaty on the very day it was opened for signature: 24 September 1996. From then on, we have given it consistent support, because we regard it as a crucial stepping stone for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

A number of principles lie behind our firm commitment to the Treaty. First, the national mandate laid down by the 1945 Indonesian Constitution to help maintain peace and justice throughout the world. Second, because the Treaty is non-discriminatory and inclusive: under its provisions, all States – whether they have nuclear arsenals or not – must play by the same rules.

**LATEST TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR THE GLOBE**

And third, because it is indeed doable: The technology is already in place to police nuclear explosions all around the world. This is made possible through an open-source International Monitoring System encompassing the entire planet, with its detectors dispersed from the poles to the tropics, whose data is owned by the 182 States that have so far signed the Treaty. Thus the Treaty represents the marriage of robust science to an inclusive and democratic international legal instrument.

We are also proud that our ratification crowned an initiative carried out in the context of our own vibrant and dynamic democracy, through which the Government has partnered closely with the legislature, civil society and other stakeholders, including the media. For only through a democratic approach, involving intensive deliberations with the participation of all stakeholders,

\(^1\) The ratification process was completed on 6 February 2012.
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can a Treaty like this gain the strong sense of ownership at home.

It is true that in the past we deferred the process of its ratification. At that time, it was a matter of principle. We reiterated that States that possessed nuclear weapons should, after all, first and foremost commit to the Treaty ahead of anyone else. That position of principle has served its purpose. Our standing has contributed to the global effort to push for the NWS to commit themselves to the Treaty. Recent events show a glimmer of hope, a gleam of possibility that the cause of disarmament can move forward much more expeditiously.

Thus, from today’s vantage point, we in Indonesia believe we can help brighten that possibility by ratifying the Treaty. As I announced at the opening of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Indonesia had decided that it was not in our interests to wait any longer. Indeed, the time to act had come.

INVESTING IN GLOBAL SECURITY

We heard familiar arguments against ratifying the Treaty, but they became too narrow to prevail. By embracing the Treaty, States lose none of their powers. On the contrary, they make a solid investment in global security insurance, a multilateral undertaking to rid planet Earth of nuclear weapons.

It must also be stressed that of 337 monitors employing four different technologies that the Treaty will rely on for verification once it is in force, 270 are already in place. And they are already functioning as a result of an investment of more than a billion dollars by the Treaty’s signatories.

On Indonesia’s part, we are contributing six certified seismic stations to the system, whose scientific capabilities offer a broad range of additional benefits to human security, including early warnings on tsunamis, new revelations about the behaviour of the Earth’s crust and enhanced monitoring of volcanic eruptions. But the core benefit from the Treaty is, of course, the advancement of the cause of global disarmament. For as long as nations continue to invest their security in nuclear arsenals, the high risk of their use remains.

ERADICATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

This is not a new concern for Indonesia. We have been dedicated to ridding the planet of nuclear weapons since shortly after their first use 65 years ago. Indonesia, one of the founders in 1961 of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), has been serving as coordinator of the Movement’s disarmament working-group for almost two decades. As such we have been spearheading global multilateral disarmament efforts throughout the world. Indonesia was among the 10 ASEAN Member States that in 1995 concluded the SEANWFZ, the most ambitious nuclear-weapon-free zone in terms of its area of application.

Thus, by ratifying the CTBT, we have reiterated our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, to promoting this noble cause in the region and beyond, and to ensuring that these goals are fulfilled. This is the first of many steps that we will take to work for the universalization and enforcement of the Treaty. Inevitably, the tide of history is turning in favour of nuclear disarmament. And as the international community moves closer to the enforcement of the CTBT, humankind also moves away from the perils of the age of nuclear weapons toward a future of more durable security and peace.