The 2012 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed the “vital importance” of entry into force of the CTBT as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is indeed disheartening that while the importance of the Treaty’s entry into force has been widely recognized by the international community, it is yet to be reached.

But the news is not all bad. One reason for optimism is the close and fruitful cooperation of States within the framework of the CTBT, particularly in the Middle East, over recent months. The Integrated Field Exercise 2014 (IFE14) in Jordan in late 2014 was a milestone for the development of the CTBT’s on-site inspection (OSI) regime. Once again, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the government of Jordan for its outstanding hospitality.

During the exercise, experts from all continents worked side by side for a common goal. IFE14 was thus an encouraging example of how the CTBT can foster cooperation amongst countries that do not usually see eye to eye on security issues. In this issue, you will find the personal reflections of several of the key protagonists involved in IFE14.

The significant progress made towards the completion of the International Monitoring System (IMS) network provides further grounds for optimism. This issue of Spectrum features contributions by our scientific colleagues and collaborators, including the CTBTO’s new IMS Director Nurcan Meral Özel. Installing an IMS station in a remote location under difficult circumstances can prove extremely challenging. IMS engineer James Robertson chronicles the challenges he and his colleague and the Papuan officials encountered during the installation and certification of infrasound station IS40 in the tropical forests of Kerevat, Papua New Guinea.

As the CTBT verification regime approaches completion, Angola’s ratification on 20 March 2015 has also moved the Treaty one step closer to universalization. The recently appointed co-chairs of the Article XIV process, Japan and Kazakhstan, are leading international efforts toward entry into force. With their dedication and wide-ranging experience, I am confident that members of the Group of Eminent Persons will continue to ensure that the CTBT’s entry into force remains on the political agenda of the key States that must still ratify the Treaty. What the Treaty needs is leadership. Leadership from the remaining eight countries to ratify the CTBT, making entry into force a reality. The ball is in their court.