This year, 2016, is an opportunity to reflect upon the CTBT, on the achievements made so far and the challenges that lie ahead. Accordingly, the Symposium “Science and Diplomacy for Peace and Security: the CTBT@20”, held at the beginning of the year in Vienna, sought to promote dialogue and cooperation between Member States, civil society, and academia. As the first in a series of events marking the 20th anniversary, 2016 marks a strong push towards bringing the CTBT into force.

During the Symposium, Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo highlighted the importance of including youth in discussions on global peace and security to inject new and creative ideas into the debate. “I believe that the time has come to bring youth more firmly on board”, said Zerbo. “I wish to invite all students and young graduates who are directing their careers to contribute to global peace and security to join a new CTBTO Youth Group.”

In his concluding speech during the Symposium, Des Browne, former UK Secretary of State for Defence and member of the CTBTO Group of Eminent Persons (GEM), suggested a new approach in realizing the goal of entry into force of the CTBT. “Rather than tell non-nuclearizing states what is in their best interest, rather than repeating our message in ever-stronger and louder voices, perhaps it would be effective to spend more time listening to what the reluctant States have to say”, remarked Browne.

In April, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed an audience, ranging from veteran officials to young leaders, on the need for the entry into force of the CTBT. “This 20th anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is not a celebration but a reminder of the work remaining”, Ban Ki-moon told the audience. “It is a call to action.”

Furthermore, this June, participants of the High Level Ministerial Meeting on the CTBT are invited to voice their needs, their security concerns, and their demands with a view to reinvigorating discussions on the issues currently blocking progress.

The CTBT’s entry into force is the next goal in nuclear non-proliferation. The historical achievement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 demonstrated that through diplomacy consensus can be reached. Our goal is to find consensus for the CTBT. “It has to be raised to a higher political level”, said Angela Kane, former UN High Representative for Disarmament and GEM Member, during the Symposium. “We need to say that this is something that needs to come into force and to put it back on the agenda again.”

“The [Iran] deal opens new opportunities, including on non-proliferation. One of them is to relaunch the process towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.”

FEDERICA MOGHERINI
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2015)

»No matter how much our views differ in terms of CTBT or nuclear related issues, I think that this time we should be more united than ever to work for the entry into force of the Treaty. I would regard this as a main task for the Prep Com for this year, 2016.«

CRISTIAN ISTRATE
Permanent Representative of Romania and Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in 2016.
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The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

1997–2005
Wolfgang Hoffmann
Germany

2005–2013
Tibor Tóth
Hungary

2013–PRESENT
Lassina Zerbo
Burkina Faso