

Thirty-Third Session
Vienna, 16-19 November 2009

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AT THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. This session comes as our organization enters the most defining period of its existence. Following 10 years of political hiatus, the Treaty is again taking its central place in the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Since early this year, political momentum for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has increased, representing a defining change in the international political context. The political determination for taking concrete actions to eliminate nuclear weapons is more assertive. There is yet again greater commitment to multilateralism.
2. The April speech by US President Obama in Prague and the subsequent London agreement by Presidents Medvedev and Obama to work towards the entry into force of the Treaty represented a paradigm shift for our Treaty and our organization. The initiatives and statements in support of the Treaty by world leaders and numerous States regvanized the collective faith in the contribution the Treaty makes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The need for ratification of the Treaty by the remaining Annex 2 States has become of even more critical importance.
3. The challenge before us is how to find the optimum balance between two legitimate expectations. The decision to join and ratify the Treaty by the remaining nine Annex 2 States will and can only be taken by these States themselves. However, the entry into force and the full implementation of the Treaty are not dependent only on the decisions by nine governments. The right balance between these two expectations will require engagement at the highest political level.
4. The leaders and the wider public of the remaining Annex 2 States should be given the necessary political space and time to address the most basic questions. Does the Treaty serve their national security interests? Can they pursue and maximize their national security interests in isolation from the security of the rest of the international community?

5. Up to now 151 States have answered the same questions. Their answer is a resounding support for the Treaty. For them the Treaty is the embodiment of security which is indivisible and underpinned by multilateral verification.
6. While the past year presented new opportunities to the Commission, it will equally be remembered for the challenges. The announced nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented a serious challenge to the Treaty and the international norm on nuclear tests. However, as was the case in 2006, the May 2009 event yet again put the Treaty's verification system to the test. The event highlighted the significant progress made in establishing the Treaty's verification regime. Moreover, the swift reaction by the international community, in Vienna, New York and capitals around the world, proved the potential value of a democratic verification system. Long before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued its announcement, we already met here in Vienna and provided States Signatories with information about the performance of the system, its ability to provide data on the location, magnitude, depth and time of the event. It was a renewed reminder that with the Treaty in force, no longer will the world community, including the United Nations Security Council, be dependent on technical data and intelligence capabilities of a few powerful nations. Even the smallest States can make independent determinations based on data and information provided by the verification regime of the Treaty.

TREATY'S VERIFICATION SYSTEM AND SCIENCE

7. The Commission has made great progress in the development of the Treaty's verification system. The Commission has devoted enormous amounts of time, effort and resources to reach this point. It can now take pride in the strong degree of confidence that exists regarding the capabilities of the system. Let me address this issue in more detail later this morning in the context of the verification related activities of the Commission.
8. Nonetheless, the operation, sustainment and enhancement of the system remain a daunting challenge. We have to maintain and promote the established confidence in the system. This is only possible by building on its capabilities.
9. We have to keep pace with scientific and technological developments. It will allow us to increase the credibility and reliability of our monitoring system. We also need to continuously provide data products of reliable quality. This demands enhanced cooperation with the scientific community.
10. The International Scientific Studies (ISS) Conference held on 10-12 June in Vienna was a unique forum for the Commission to interact with the scientific community. States and civil society showed a great interest in the conference. It was attended by around 600 participants from 99 countries. Nearly 500 scientists contributed to the more than 200 scientific posters covering the Treaty's four verification technologies as well as atmospheric transport modelling, system performance, on-site inspection (OSI) and data mining.

11. The conference evaluated the readiness and capabilities of the verification system. It addressed possible improvements in these capabilities and examined civil and scientific applications of the monitoring system. The ISS project, since its initiation in 2005, has been meant to be a process of effective long term interaction with the scientific community. We intend to build on its success, to carry it forward and set the stage for further cooperation.
12. The Commission also needs to take advantage of the political momentum by making real progress over the next few years in developing OSI readiness. However, this work cannot proceed on an ad hoc basis. It must be guided by an overall strategic vision that sets out the road ahead in the medium term. Thanks to the OSI action plan, we have a clear picture for the next few years.
13. The plan is the product of a methodical process of review and follow-up of the 2008 Integrated Field Exercise. It takes into account all of the valuable inputs to that process: the workshops, the evaluation report and the comprehensive database of lessons learned. The plan contains nearly 40 projects covering the full spectrum of OSI issues, from equipment to methodology and from documentation to training. We will rigorously prioritize the various elements, focusing on activities with high value and impact. We will also continue to collaborate closely with States Signatories to take advantage of national expertise and contributions in kind. And, of course, we will consult closely with you to make certain that appropriate resources are allocated to OSI in the context of the annual Programme and Budget.

MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

14. On previous occasions, I reported to you on our human resource needs. As you are fully aware, with the evolution of our verification system the tasks and workload of the Commission have increased significantly. In spite of its rising workload, the staffing level of the organization has remained unchanged since 2002. It is becoming ever more difficult to provide the growing range of quality services with the existing number of staff. This is at a time when we are gradually implementing the long list of 'must do' tasks, each of which is associated with many projects and activities. The situation, if not tackled, could take a toll on the volume and quality of our services. It therefore demands your special attention.
15. During the recent sessions of the Commission, Working Group A and Working Group B, there have been expressions of readiness on your part to address the situation. This is encouraging. Based on the request to identify those areas where additional regular posts should be added to cope with the increased workload, I will share with you in the run-up to the next Medium Term Plan discussion a list of around one dozen posts where in my judgement such an exigency exists.
16. In addition to a minimal expansion of regular posts, the Commission needs to enjoy the same flexibility concerning human resources that is extended to other organizations based at the Vienna International Centre (VIC). It has to be able to recruit and retain

high performance staff by applying an optimized employment policy. It should also be supported through provision of cost-free experts and contributions in kind.

17. Related to the staffing issue is the United Nations common system. For an organization as important and as challenging as ours, recruiting and retaining people of high calibre are essential. Compared with other international organizations, the Commission is less attractive to potential employment candidates since it is not a member of the common system. We are losing staff even to some of our sister organizations here in the VIC. The significant benefits of joining the system for the Commission far outweigh the small costs of membership. I therefore wish to repeat my request that the Commission be allowed to officially join the United Nations common system.
18. Your readiness to listen to these concerns already makes a great difference. I hope that with your support we will be able to resolve these issues in 2010.

ARTICLE XIV CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING ENTRY INTO FORCE

19. On the 13th anniversary of the birth of the Treaty, a couple of high level events took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The sixth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty this year coincided with a United Nations Security Council summit. These two meetings, along with the sixty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, placed a unique spotlight on the Treaty and its entry into force. The growing interest in the Treaty and support for the work of the Commission were remarkable. It was the first time since 1996 that the Treaty had received such high level attention.
20. The Article XIV conference was held on 24-25 September. It was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and chaired by the Foreign Ministers of France and Morocco. This year's conference was characterized by a great sense of purpose and hope. This was manifested in the high attendance figures: 106 States, comprising 89 ratifying States, 14 signatory States and 3 non-signatory States, participated and nearly 40 Ministers addressed the conference.
21. The conference reviewed the status of the Treaty and the work of the Commission. The Commission was lauded for its persistent efforts in preparing for effective implementation of the Treaty. Participants also underscored the importance of the Treaty for international peace and security. The conference was an occasion for States Signatories to renew their commitment to the Treaty and its objectives. Many speakers elaborated on actions required for entry into force and for further development of the verification regime. The conference adopted by consensus its Final Declaration. This robust declaration was taken by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Foreign Ministers of France and Morocco to the doorstep of the Security Council summit meeting. The declaration acknowledges the contribution of the Treaty to the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It also expresses the unequivocal and firm political resolve of States Signatories with regard to the entry into force of the Treaty. This was echoed by the resolution adopted by the Security Council, which called on all States to refrain from conducting nuclear test explosions and to join

the Treaty, thereby bringing it into force at an early date. This is an expression of recognition of and support for the Treaty at the highest level.

22. The media attention given to the Treaty reached unparalleled levels before, during and after the New York events. The coverage of the Treaty and the Article XIV conference was worldwide. Hundreds of articles and media reports from various countries and in different languages covered the Treaty and issues related to it. Prominent non-governmental organizations and think tanks in the disarmament area also showed great interest by holding seminars or issuing publications about the Treaty and the Commission. This certainly has helped to promote public awareness about the Treaty.
23. On the eve of the Article XIV conference in New York, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ratified the Treaty. We finally reached the milestone of 150 ratifications. With the recent signature by Trinidad and Tobago and ratification by the Marshall Islands, the Treaty now enjoys 182 signatures and 151 ratifications. These figures mean a lot. They signify an increasing international commitment to the objectives of the Treaty. They also mean a much strengthened international norm against nuclear testing. To illustrate the achievements made towards universalization of the Treaty, it is enough to remember that 10 years ago there were only 50 ratifications. One hundred more countries have added their voices of support for this Treaty during the most challenging decade for the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.
24. Nevertheless, our mission is far from over. We must continue our drive to secure the Treaty's entry into force. This requires more robust outreach activities for the remaining Annex 2 States. At the same time, the outreach activities should continue to pursue universalization of the Treaty. Every single new ratification reinforces the international norm against nuclear tests and helps encourage ratification of the Treaty by Annex 2 States.

CONCLUSION

25. The renewed political support for the Treaty and the work of the Commission is unprecedented. We are witnessing a lively debate in favour of the Treaty among politicians and civil society in several of the remaining Annex 2 States. There is a renewed hope that the Treaty in force is no longer a distant vision.
26. Indeed it is an achievable goal. But we are to take the final steps. The challenge is how to put powerful words into concrete action not just in the coming years, and not even in the coming months, but as we speak. We have to turn each and every day into 24 September, the day when our Ministers at the Article XIV conference pledged to bring this Treaty into force. We need even more dedication, more commitment and more resolve. And we need our leaders to lead us while we make this last mile. We no longer have the luxury of time to ponder about what to do. It is time to translate the wide political support into concrete action. It is time to 'walk the talk'. Not just a few of us, but each and every one of us. That 'walk the talk' will define how much security we all will have for decades to come.