
**Address by the Executive Secretary
of the Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
Mr. Tibor Tóth**

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I have the pleasure to address this Assembly under the agenda item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization”. I am here to report on the status of the CTBT and the progress achieved by the Preparatory Commission.

The United Nations has worked relentlessly to maintain international peace and security through collective action. Ridding the world of the dangers of nuclear weapons has been a key area. Active and sustained cooperation among States and between them and international organizations is vital for achieving this noble ambition. The Preparatory Commission works closely with the United Nations. Enhanced cooperation in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament reinforces the cooperative security structures that promote international peace and security. The General Assembly resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission is an embodiment of the importance of such cooperation. It is a necessity if we are to realize peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons.

The most part of this past decade has been particularly challenging for multilateralism and nuclear non-proliferation. It witnessed the erosion of the multilateral approach, and the retraction of previous commitments on nuclear disarmament. The CTBT felt the full brunt of these realities. The Treaty endured especially difficult times politically. Yet despite these challenges and the less than favourable political environment, a certain momentum has carried it through. States Signatories have proved their conviction in the noble goals of the Treaty, making political, financial and scientific investments.

The CTBT promises to be, as it has always been, a uniting force in the multilateral system. The international community has rallied around the Treaty bringing it to near universal membership. Since I have last addressed this Assembly, two additional states have signed the Treaty and eight have deposited their instruments of ratifications. Today, 182 countries have signed the Treaty. Ten years ago, there were only 50 ratifications. Today 153 states have ratified, representing a threefold increase in ratifications. This is indeed an outstanding achievement.

The CTBT was and remains the rallying point for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As an all inclusive, democratic, non-discriminatory legal instrument, the international community's belief in this unique political and scientific arrangement is overwhelming. What lies behind this political determination is a vision to bring an end to nuclear weapons; a strong desire to establish an international norm against nuclear testing; a firm political will to advance the Treaty's entry into force. But for the Treaty to enter into force, the signature and ratification of the remaining nine Annex 2 states is still required.

I am also pleased to report that there has been substantial progress in the development of the Treaty's verification system over the past decade. The Commission has come within sight of the fulfilment of its mandate. Through commitment and very hard work, we are approaching the point of readiness for the entry into force of the Treaty. The number of certified International Monitoring System (IMS) stations has increased from zero to 259 stations in the last ten years. Ten radionuclide laboratories have also been certified. Moreover, as of today, 26 noble gas systems have been installed at IMS radionuclide stations. In August 2010, the Preparatory Commission formally integrated its first radionuclide station with noble gas detection capabilities into the Treaty's global verification regime. Such a rapid increase in the number of stations installed and certified has further ensured coverage and network resilience.

In parallel with the steady instalment and certification of IMS stations, the activities and services of the International Data Centre (IDC) have multiplied significantly. The volume of data and data products shows a significant growth. The average daily number of events contained in the Reviewed Event Bulletin has grown from 50 in 2000 to nearly 100. With further expansion of our seismic network and the reduction of the global detection threshold, this figure will continue to rise further.

The progress in the on-site inspection (OSI) regime has also been steady. Our strategic goal was to achieve OSI readiness at entry into force of the Treaty. To that end, we have developed the OSI methodology and necessary policies. In conjunction with planning and running field exercises, we have undertaken to procure and develop certain OSI equipment.

The Commission recognizes the unique value of the investment with which it has been entrusted by Member States. Its Members have invested approximately \$1 billion in the system. The system is truly unprecedented in its global reach. It is a significant asset of the international community. This investment is a platform for scientific knowledge and capacity development in Member States. Whether it is in the area of early tsunami warning, aviation safety, climate change, or marine life research, the four monitoring technologies provide clear benefits.

The system has been tried and tested by the two DPRK test explosions in 2006 and 2009. These tests have been deplored by the international community. They posed a direct challenge to the Treaty and the Commission. But they proved the reliability of the system. The two events tested our technical capabilities and procedures. They proved the value of the global verification system to the international community. The international community's investment has proved to be sound and effective. Coupled with On-Site inspections, the Treaty's verifiability need not be questioned.

Recently, there have been renewed efforts towards global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Aspirations for the realization of the dream of a world free of nuclear weapons have been revived. The conclusion of the new START agreement was an important milestone. High-level events, such as the Global Summit on Nuclear Security and the NPT Review Conference have deepened that sense of optimism. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched his five-point nuclear disarmament proposal. Proposals to rid the world of all nuclear weapons were put forward by influential world leaders as well highly respectable non-governmental actors. The Security Council's summit in 2009 also affirmed the commitment to work toward a world without nuclear weapons. The Article XIV Conference of States Signatories held here in NY in 2009 was attended by more than 110 countries, 40 of which at Ministerial level. In its consensus Final Declaration, hold-out States were called on to sign and ratify the CTBT for it to enter into force.

Political will of the international community is evident. Multilateralism has not withered away. Multilateral and pluri-lateral action to face common challenges is indeed still possible. It is perhaps the only way forward in a world of increasing complexity. But we must seize the moment. We need leadership in states that have ratified the Treaty, and in those which are yet to ratify.

There is no doubt that the ratification by the United States can be a transformational act, both for the Treaty and the non-proliferation regime. US ratification would reinforce the hitherto excellent cooperation between the US and the Preparatory Commission in the building and operation of the monitoring stations on US soil. Over 90% of the facilities foreseen by the Treaty to be hosted by the US have already been built and certified. In Russia, over 70% of the stations have been built and certified. The ratification of the Treaty by all NWS, and the completion of the monitoring facilities on their territories can only reinforce the Treaty's democratic, non-discriminatory character, and assure all States Parties of the equality in obligations and transparency in verification.

But control systems can only function through the acceptance by all actors of the need, the effectiveness and the fairness of the rule-based system. In this regard, the steps that need to be taken to strengthen the arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture are pretty clear. The entry into force of the CTBT is among the first steps that need to be taken. It provides a firm legal barrier against nuclear testing, thereby curbing the development of new types and designs of nuclear weapons.

The CTBT also ensures that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are indeed peaceful, and is crucial in a world in which we see the resurgence of nuclear energy. Since more and more states are mastering the nuclear fuel cycle, technology alone will no longer be the determining factor in the decision by states to use nuclear energy for peaceful or for weapons

purposes. Legal instruments “upstream” of the nuclear fuel cycle are facing increasing difficulties when it comes to the delineation between prohibited and permitted activities. A nuclear test provides unquestionable “downstream” proof of the intentions of a state. The CTBT thus provides the last and clearly visible barrier between the two. This legal line needs to be drawn clear and irrevocably. A CTBT in force would also be an incentive for ending the production of fissile material for weapons use, pending the negotiations and entry into force of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, as well as reducing the stocks of such materials.

The CTBT could also serve as a regional confidence and security building measure. In this regard, I am pleased to note the entry into force earlier this year of the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. This is a most welcome development. Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) and the CTBT are bound in spirit and letter, and share a common history. The Zones and the CTBT complement each other. Both contain legal obligations to prohibit nuclear tests. While the CTBT is not yet in force, it is already effectively in force in all the States covered by existing zones. The CTBT and its organisation bolster NWFZs by providing states with a powerful verification mechanism. States covered by existing NWFZs should have no political obstacles to ratifying the CTBT. They have already made a legally binding commitment not to test nuclear weapons or to allow nuclear testing on their territories. Nevertheless, around 30% of the States under these zones have not yet ratified the CTBT. The signing and ratification by these states will make a significant impact on both the universalization of the CTBT and its entry into force. It will also further strengthen their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations under the NPT. Equally, the ratification of the African NWFZ Treaty by African states that have already ratified the CTBT but not the Pelindaba Treaty will significantly boost the membership of the latter treaty. It will further strengthen the resolve of African nations: no nuclear weapons and no more nuclear testing.

By ratifying the CTBT, countries unequivocally state that the Treaty is fundamental to their own national security interests. Such action can also pave the way for the establishment of the NWFZ in the Middle East. The ratification of the CTBT by Egypt, Iran and Israel, all of which are Annex 2 states, can have wide ranging implications for security in a sub-regional and regional context. The ratification by these three states would reinforce the political commitment made by 90% of the states in the Middle East to the norm of non-testing. Such a step would be a positive catalyst for other security issues affecting the region. The CTBT represents an opportunity to build confidence and promote regional stability.

The CTBT is clear of great significance for the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It has a key role to play in today’s security environment. More than two thousand tests were conducted prior to the Treaty’s conclusion in 1996. Every test eroded global security, and widened the gap in political trust. In the last decade, there have only been two nuclear test explosions. The difference is clear. But it is high time for concrete action. The entry into force of the Treaty may be the single defining factor for the nuclear non-proliferation regime in the next 30 years.

We must seize the moment. There is no room for complicity, no place for inaction. The present moment in time is the moment of truth. A moment for action. I sincerely hope that we will not let it slip away. We can’t afford to. It is too precious to let it pass by.