

**Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).**

New York, 24/25 September 2009.

***Remarks by Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, Special Representative to Promote the
Ratification Process of the CTBT.***

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

1. Today I am addressing you for the last time in my capacity as Special Representative to promote the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.
2. I have been involved in efforts to ban explosive nuclear weapon testing on and off since 1983. But let me say this. In my entire career as a Dutch diplomat nothing has been more rewarding to me than the opportunity I was given in 1996 to preside over the final round of the Nuclear Test-Ban negotiations. I felt - and still feel - immensely privileged that in this way I could be helpful in bringing about that decades old dream: the conclusion of a total ban on **all** nuclear weapon test explosions in **all** environments, for **all** time. "The longest sought, hardest fought prize in the history of arms control," as President Clinton put it at the time.
3. Admittedly, we have seen setbacks since then: India's and Pakistan's nuclear weapons test explosions shocked the world in the spring of 1998. So still do those recently conducted by the DPRK.
4. And then, of course, we saw a major setback: the rejection of the CTBT by the US Senate in October 1999, ten years ago almost to the day. That rejection sent shock waves through the world too, be it of an entirely different kind.
5. But we, the international community, never gave up hope. And together we did make progress. The efforts of many, of countries, international fora, of NGO's, and of individuals, brought us where we are today. Ten years ago some 140 odd countries had signed while literally only a handful had ratified the CTBT. Today, almost the entire international community, 181 countries, signed, and 150 ratified the CTBT. This illustrates the undiminished importance the international community attaches to the CTBT till this very day.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

6. Over the last five years, as your Special Representative, I have met with members of government and other high ranking officials of almost all of the countries that yet had to sign/ratify, here in New York or elsewhere in the world. With my activities I hope to have made a small contribution to increasing the international support for the Treaty and to the international norm against nuclear weapons

testing it embodies. And that norm, Ladies and Gentlemen, has taken root already now, well before the Treaty will be fully functioning. The Resolution adopted earlier this morning by the UN Security Council is the most recent illustration of this.

7. All of this shows the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty's continued viability, the promise it holds to make its own unique contribution to a safer world. Today, powerful forces throw once again their full political weight behind the Treaty. And to me there is no doubt: time has come for governments to bring to bear their full political influence at high, and sometimes at the highest, political level to bring the CTBT into reality. Under these circumstances I feel that for me the time has come to turn that proverbial page and step down as Special Representative to promote the CTBT.
8. But, before concluding, let me thank successive co-ordinating countries for their efforts to promote the CTBT over the last decade. I wish to mention Japan, the first co-ordinating country, and its successor, Mexico. And, since 2003, when I took up my task as Special Representative for the CTBT I wish to mention, Finland, Australia, as well as Austria and Costa Rica operating in tandem during the last two years. I felt honoured to have travelled many parts of the world under their flags in a quest for wider support for the CTBT.
9. I wish the incoming co-ordinators France, a nuclear weapon state and the very first country to accept my draft Treaty text at the time in 1996, and Morocco every success. My thoughts will be with them in the coming years.
10. May I take this opportunity also to thank the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, for his unwavering support to the cause of the CTBT. As a one time Chairperson of the CTBTO Preparatory Committee in Vienna, I may not be far from the truth when I assume that the CTBT occupies a special place in his heart. A word of thanks I owe also to his High Representative, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, my friend and colleague for more than a quarter of a century, for all his support.
11. I wish to express my great respect for Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany, my colleague in Geneva during the test ban negotiations. As the CTBTO's first Executive Secretary he built an impressively effective organisation literally from scratch. I am grateful for the excellent co-operation I have had the last few years with his successor, Ambassador Tibor Tóth. His steady hand and wise leadership have earned him and the CTBTO the excellent international reputation they both deserve. I wish him and his dedicated staff in Vienna, every success.
12. I would really be remiss if I would not express my profound gratitude to the government of my country, The Netherlands, today represented here by Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen. Without Minister Verhagen's personal support and that of his predecessors, without the generosity and assistance of his Ministry, material and otherwise, I could not have performed my function as CTBT Special Representative of the countries that ratified the CTBT.

13. Finally, but most importantly, I wish to thank my wife for her patience with me and, I should say, and with that Treaty she by now must know by heart.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

14. The immediate prospects for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation look brighter than has been the case for many years. The growing acceptance of what some distinguished authors recently called "the logic of zero" is encouraging. Of course, in today's world the ultimate objective, a complete elimination of nuclear weapons, is still a distant dream. But it will remain so for ever if we cannot first agree amongst ourselves on the required intermediate steps towards that objective. Bringing the CTBT into effect is one of those steps, and an essential one at that.

15. I sincerely hope that this Conference will send a strong signal to the world. And, perhaps more relevant, I strongly hope that this signal will resonate in the ears also of those countries still hesitant to embrace the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the ideas it stands for.

I thank you all.