



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
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STATEMENT BY

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

at the Article XIV Conference of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

NEW YORK, 24 September 2009

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Please allow me to add the following remarks.

A year ago today, at the 63rd session of the General Assembly, I noted that the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation was gaining renewed momentum. Now, a year later, I am delighted to see that the cause *has* gained momentum. President Obama's call in Prague earlier this year for a nuclear-free world, and his announcement that the United States will take concrete steps towards this goal, have provided an opportunity that the world has long awaited. This morning's meeting of the Security Council – chaired by President Obama – is another indication that serious work is being done. We should not let this opportunity go to waste.

It is in all our interests, and in the interests of the world's peoples, that we act now. Because in this day and age, the danger posed by nuclear weapons has become more complex. There are more countries today that have nuclear arms, or are trying to develop them, than when the Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed in 1968. Iran's consistent refusal to comply with the IAEA's and other international requirements is an example of the provocative and irresponsible approach that some countries persist in taking. Another example is North Korea's most recent nuclear test, only four months ago, which the world has condemned in the sharpest terms. Such actions are a threat to international peace and security. They run contrary to what we are collectively trying to achieve here.

In response, we need to make our legally binding system of international agreements and their compliance and enforcement mechanisms more effective. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is at the heart of our non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. We must ensure that next year's Review Conference heads in new directions and leads to concrete proposals for international action. The last Preparatory Committee, which was held in New York in May, gave me the impression that success is within reach. We must not fail to deliver.

In this context, I would like to stress the importance of immediately starting to negotiate and rapidly concluding a verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. Also in May, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva agreed that these negotiations should begin. We should now follow up and implement the agreement made in Geneva.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty should not be seen as entirely separate agreements; they are linked and mutually reinforcing. If you view the NPT as a house, the FMCT is bound to strengthen its foundations. And the CTBT, which is our main subject of discussion today, serves as its roof.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thanks to the renewed positive dynamic, I am more optimistic today than I was before about the possibility of the CTBT's entering into force. Since the last Article XIV Conference two years ago, five additional states have ratified the treaty – including Colombia, which is an Annex II state. And eight additional states have signed the CTBT. We still need nine ratifications for it to enter into force. I hope all the states concerned will soon live up to their moral responsibility and take this crucial step.

I was very pleased to see Secretary of State Clinton taking part in this conference today. I am convinced that the current administration will deliver US ratification of the CTBT, as President Obama announced in Prague. I sincerely hope that the ratification process will be swift. I am sure that US ratification will persuade others to follow suit; China and Indonesia have already indicated that it will.

In the meantime, we should continue to expand the Treaty's verification network, which is by and large up and running. It has already proven to be effective. Confidence in the Treaty's verification network is essential: effective verification will help persuade states to comply. I welcome the efforts of the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to enlarge the verification network and to work towards the Treaty's entry into force. The Secretariat can count on the Netherlands' continued support.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Special Representative to Promote the CTBT Ratification Process, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker.

Jaap, as one of Treaty's founding fathers, you have worked tirelessly to promote it. I deeply respect your unflagging dedication, from the days when you chaired the CTBT final negotiations up to the present. It would have been wonderful if the moment of your departure could have coincided with the CTBT's entry into force. In any event, as I know that – like me – you are an optimist by nature, I am sure you would agree that the day is drawing closer. Thank you very much for all your efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For a long time, the train of non-proliferation and disarmament seemed to be moving far too slowly. There was some progress, but faith in a successful outcome seemed to be lacking. Now, with more favourable conditions prevailing, we should speed the train up so that it will take us more swiftly to our common destination: a world free of nuclear weapons. The CTBT's entry into force is a crucial station along that route. I believe that we can make it happen – now is the time.

Thank you.