

**Address by the Executive Secretary
Of the Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Lassina Zerbo

**Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
(New York, 27 September 2013)**

Your Excellencies the Co-Presidents, Minister Martonyi, Minister
Natalegawa
Your Excellency Ms Angela Kane,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the eighth Article XIV Conference to accelerate the entry into force of the CTBT. It is my first Conference since I assumed my functions in August 2013, less than 60 days ago.

The high powered presence of the Secretary General and so many Ministers is an expression of conviction and determination. We are grateful for your presence. I am grateful for your support and determination.

Mexico and Sweden have successfully guided our ratification efforts during the last two years. We welcome Hungary and Indonesia's commitment to lead this drive to complete fruition. This is a vote of confidence in the Treaty and the work of the organization. Your conviction in the value of the Treaty is the ultimate expression of faith in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Member States have proved their conviction in the noble goals of the Treaty, making political, scientific and financial investments.

Today, the prospects for the entry into force of the Treaty appear much more positive than they did for many years. It shall be up to you to seize the moment and to determine the action necessary to realize the dream.

The General Assembly's High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held yesterday marked the resolve of the international community to breathe new life into the multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Many speakers underlined the need for all States to refrain from conducting nuclear test explosions and to join the CTBT, thereby bringing the Treaty into force at an early date.

The High Level Meeting brings the Treaty back to the top of the global multilateral and non-proliferation agenda. It does so at the highest level. It is up to Member States to translate this new momentum into concrete action.

The CTBT is a uniting force in the multilateral system. The Treaty today boasts a near universal membership. 183 countries have signed the Treaty. Guinea-Bissau and Iraq deposited their instruments of ratification on the eve of our meeting, bringing the total number of ratifications to 161.

This is an increase of one signature and six ratifications since we last met in 2011. This is indeed an outstanding achievement.

For those Member States, the question is not "if", but rather "when" will the Treaty enter into force. The message is simple: the international community's belief in this unique political and scientific arrangement is overwhelming.

There is continued commitment by a number of Annex II States to ratify the Treaty. We are also receiving unequivocal signals from the remaining non-signatories in virtually all continents of their interest in joining this truly universal march towards entry into force.

I am working day in and day out to get each of these countries to ratify. I won't stop until it's done. What drives me is that I do feel progress. We are working with political leaders and experts to secure the remaining eight ratifications. Yesterday, I launched the first meeting of the Group of Eminent Experts, or GEM. The Group will inject new energy and dynamics into the entry into force process. I would like to welcome the distinguished members of Group who are here with us today. As I look to this group, I am inspired by the sheer

magnitude of their experience and expertise. Through their credibility, credentials, and experience, I expect the Group to open new paths for the entry into force of the Treaty.

My message is simple: the best way forward is to make the de-facto norm banning nuclear tests a legally-binding commitment. Rather than relying on the observance of national, voluntary moratoria, we need to end nuclear tests. Significant progress has been made of the fulfillment of the mandate of the Preparatory Commission.

We are approaching the point of readiness for the entry into force of the Treaty. More than 85% of the International Monitoring System's global monitoring stations are already sending operational-standard data to the headquarters in Vienna. The International Data Centre has mastered the processing of the increased volume of data transmitted from the stations thanks to the advances made in processing methods and software.

The On Site Inspection regime is steadily being built-up in close collaboration with Member States. The next Integrated Field Exercise will take place in 2014 in Jordan to put to the test an enhanced operational readiness of the regime.

Yet again, the system has been tried and tested. Through its network of stations, the CTBTO was able to provide reliable, real time, accurate and verified data on the February 2013 DPRK nuclear test in the DPRK. The verification system further detected and measured radioactive noble gases in April 2013, confirming the sensitivity and uniqueness of the monitoring system. This data was immediately made available to all CTBT States Signatories and to international agencies and other actors. The international community was able to make informed decisions about the best course of action.

This system, designed to ensure compliance with the Treaty, has proved, yet again, its political, scientific, and technical excellence.

Your Excellencies the Co-Presidents,

The international community has rallied around the CTBT since its adoption in 1996. We should be proud of the work accomplished so far. I pledge before

you today to continue the work of my predecessors. I pledge to work with you to achieve the entry into force of the Treaty.

We need sustained leadership to maintain the momentum. We need to redouble our efforts. Whether Governments, scientists, academics or NGOs, we all have to carry the burden to lead; each in our own sphere. Anything less would be an injustice to this noble endeavour.

Thank you