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Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV)

Statement by

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and to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

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Co-chairs and colleagues,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is widely recognised as an invaluable component of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Yet 17 years after the treaty was opened for signature and ratification, its entry into force continues to elude the international community.

The declarations by some states yet to ratify the CTBT of a moratorium on their nuclear testing are welcome.

However, the international community's goal remains a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear test explosions for all time through the CTBT's entry into force.

Australia looks to the Annex 2 states whose ratification is required for entry into force but are yet to ratify the treaty – China, the DPRK, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America – to advance the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and ratify the treaty.

In this context, Australia commends those states that have signed and ratified the treaty since the last Article XIV Conference in 2011, particularly our

neighbour Indonesia, the latest Annex 2 state to ratify, as well as most recently, Guinea-Bissau.

We encourage others to follow their example.

Australia strongly condemns the test conducted by the DPRK on 12 February, in clear violation of its international obligations under several Security Council resolutions and in contempt of the will of the international community.

The detection of this test demonstrates the effectiveness of the international monitoring and verification system already in place but also highlights the importance of the treaty and its entry into force.

Australia supported the strong Security Council response to the DPRK's nuclear activities and urges all states to fully implement and diligently enforce the sanctions imposed by the Security Council.

Australia is pleased to have been a consistently strong CTBT proponent.

Australia played an active role in CTBT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) from 1994 to 1996 and was at the forefront of bringing the treaty to the United Nations, where it was overwhelmingly adopted.

Australia is honoured to participate in the eight-country "Friends of the CTBT", which meets biennially to maintain high-level advocacy. And we are a proud member of the 12 country Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), which is committed to achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia reaffirms its strong support to the CTBTO, particularly through our hosting of the third largest number of stations in the International Monitoring System.

In conclusion, the earliest possible entry into force of the CTBT is a non-proliferation and disarmament priority for which Australia will continue to advocate.

I thank you.