

STATEMENT

by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria to the 11th Article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

New York, 25 September 2019

Distinguished Co-Presidents,

On behalf of the Bulgarian Delegation, let me begin by congratulating Algeria and Germany on assuming the Presidency of the Eleventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. Let me also express our appreciation to the outgoing Article XIV process Coordinators – Belgium and Iraq, as well as to the Executive Secretary and the Preparatory Commission for their efforts to prepare this Conference. I would like to assure you of Bulgaria's full support for achieving a successful outcome to this meeting.

Bulgaria fully associates with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today 184 nations have signed the Treaty and 168 have ratified it. We welcome the ratification of the Treaty by Thailand and Zimbabwe as a positive development since the 2017 Article XIV Conference. Yet even more efforts are needed in order to bring the Treaty into force. As a country from Annex II that has signed and ratified the Treaty, Bulgaria calls upon all States, in particular Annex II States, who have not done so yet, to sign and ratify the CTBT at their earliest opportunity.

It is vital for the international community to ensure the early entry into force and the universalization of the CTBT as a key instrument of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Once in force, the CTBT will be a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosions of any kind. An in-force Treaty would make it harder to modernize the nuclear weapons. Bulgaria strongly believes that the entry into force and the universalization of this Treaty are not only a political imperative but also a practical contribution to further strengthening the international peace and security and underpins our efforts towards global disarmament.

We note the latest developments regarding the DPRK's nuclear tests and negotiations between the U.S. and DPRK on the matter. We urge the DPRK to engage seriously in the negotiations process with a view to abandoning its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and to sign and ratify the CTBT without any delay. Furthermore, we urge DPRK to take concrete actions on the path towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and to comply with its obligations under all relevant UNSC resolutions.

We appreciate the *de facto* moratorium on nuclear test explosions observed by many of the states that have not yet ratified the CTBT. These unilateral measures, however, need to be enhanced by legally binding and verifiable prohibition in force for all.

We call upon all other states to refrain from actions that would undermine the Treaty's crucial role in prohibiting any nuclear test explosions pending its entry into force.

I am glad to note the progress made by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat in developing the International Monitoring System (IMS) of the Treaty. We also commend the work of the International Data Center (IDC). It is encouraging that the IMS and IDC have also demonstrated their utility in bringing scientific and civil benefits, including for tsunami warning systems and possibly other disaster alert systems.

Bulgaria has a particular interest in joining the CTBTO network of radionuclide stations with a noble radioactive gases monitoring station on its territory that will cover the whole region, thus contributing to global nuclear safety.

Distinguished Colleagues,

I hope that the message in the Final Declaration resonates with the remaining Annex II states and that it will speed up the entry into force of CTBT.

Thank you.