



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
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Statement By
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To The Conference on
Facilitating
The Entry Into Force Of
The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

New York, 23 September 2005

Mr. President,

Antigua and Barbuda possess no nuclear capability. Moreover, the Caribbean is a peaceful nuclear-free region. Yet the testing of nuclear weapons, in one part of the world carries with it the risk of accidents that can have severe implications in other areas, no matter how far removed geographically. Furthermore, the processes of globalization bring those threats very close to our shores, making threats to international security de facto threats to any and all individuals and nations.

For these reasons, in a forum such as this Antigua and Barbuda cannot remain in obscurity. We have recognized the need to fulfill our role in helping the international community to deal with the threat posed by nuclear weapons testing.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On 16 April 1997 Antigua and Barbuda signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, in full recognition of the importance of such an international agreement to ensure that we live in a peaceful and secure world. I am happy to report that two weeks ago our Cabinet decided that Antigua and Barbuda is ready to be removed from the list of "nonratifiers" **Our instrument of ratification is being prepared for deposit, even as I address you.**

Mr President,

In the process of working towards ratification, we have had to take several factors into consideration. Firstly, we had to give very serious consideration of the importance of the issue to a small country like ours. In light of this, we realize that, as signatories to the Treaty, we will not shy away from our responsibility to help make it an effective constraint against nuclear testing and an eventual nuclear attack anywhere in the world.

Secondly, given our limited resource base, both financial as well as human resources, we had to consider the financial obligations of ratification. Another factor was the legal requirements that would follow-on from the point of ratification; the implications of any required legal amendments and/or additions; as well as the human resource capability that would be required.

Based on our experience we have recognized that successfully completing the process of ratification and furthering implementation requires partnerships at all levels,

including at the regional level, through regional organizations, and international level, through the United Nations system. To this end, Antigua and Barbuda owes a debt of gratitude to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) for holding a seminar in May, in Antigua, as part of the preparatory process for ratification. We are also grateful for the workshop held this week in Guatemala which allowed Latin American and Caribbean countries to enter into dialogue about the benefits that are to be had from this Treaty.

We welcomed the opportunity provided by both of these fora in increasing the awareness of the Treaty, in fostering a greater understanding of its significance and further recognition of its importance to Antigua and Barbuda. As we wait for the entry into force of this Treaty, we continue to look towards the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) for a fruitful partnership.

Mr. President,

Last week Antigua and Barbuda noted with regret that despite the many exhortations, the World Summit Outcome Document contained no language addressing disarmament and non-proliferation. Against this backdrop, it becomes incumbent on this body to remind the international community that without real commitments to progressively eliminate nuclear arsenals, we run the risk of nullifying all of the commitments that we as Member States have made for social, economic and human development. In this regard, Antigua and Barbuda hails as outstanding the work of Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffman in building up the Treaty Verification regime. We wish every success to Mt Tibor Toth in his activities aimed at preparation for the Treaty implementation and entry into force. Also, I would like to personally congratulate H.E. Alexander Downer on his assumption of the Presidency of this important Conference.

Mr. President,

Antigua and Barbuda is persuaded that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are in the best interest of humanity. They are challenges that remain unique to this period of human history and development. For our part, we remain resolute in living up to our obligations. We appeal to all states to do the same.

I thank you.