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English Only

**Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**
New York, 25 September 2019

**PROGRESS REPORT ON
THE CO-PRESIDENCY BY BELGIUM AND IRAQ
OF THE ARTICLE XIV PROCESS
FROM SEPTEMBER 2017 TO SEPTEMBER 2019**

1. Belgium and Iraq assumed the co-presidency of the Tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) (Article XIV conference) on 20 September 2017. Since then, both countries, as the Co-Coordiators for the entry into force of the CTBT, have led and coordinated international efforts for the promotion of the Treaty's early entry into force and universalization. During their tenure, Thailand and Zimbabwe ratified the Treaty and Tuvalu signed the Treaty. Today, the CTBT has 184 States Signatories, of which 168 have also ratified the Treaty.
2. During their tenure, Belgium and Iraq conducted many activities, individually or jointly, based on the Action Plan which set out the measures to be taken by the Co-Coordiators in support of implementing the Final Declaration and Measures to Promote the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty adopted at the 2017 Article XIV conference. The Co-Coordiators' activities include the following:
 - (1) Approaches by Belgium and Iraq to non-ratifying States
 - Belgium and Iraq, individually and jointly, delivered diplomatic démarches to the remaining Annex 2 and other non-ratifying States, at political and ambassadorial levels, throughout their tenure as Co-Coordiators. These meetings were held in the respective capitals of these States, as well as in Brussels, Baghdad and Vienna. In these meetings, the Co-Coordiators highlighted the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT, called for non-ratifying States' early signature and ratification of the Treaty and for their increased engagement with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization's (CTBTO) International Monitoring System (IMS),

while bearing in mind the country specific context of each non-ratifying State.

- Belgium, both in its national capacity and as a member of the EU, reiterated in various international forums its support for the Treaty and the importance it attaches to the Treaty's early entry into force.
 - Iraq, in its national capacity, reiterated in various international forums its support for the Treaty and the importance it attaches to the Treaty's early entry into force.
 - The Foreign Ministers of Belgium and Iraq, alongside the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, published an op-ed in leading international newspapers entitled: "Why prohibiting nuclear testing matters, and what we can do about it" (September 2017).
 - Belgium and Iraq co-chaired the Article XIV Conference in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (September 2017).
 - Belgium, in cooperation with the Egmont Institute, and with the presence of the Iraqi Ambassador to Belgium, organized an international conference on the CTBT in Brussels: "Towards a world without nuclear tests: fulfilling the promise", with the participation of the CTBTO Executive Secretary as well as European Union (EU) & Annex 2 States representatives (May 2018).
 - Belgium organized the meeting of CTBTO Executive Secretary with Members of the European Parliament during his visit to Brussels (May 2018).
 - The Foreign Ministers of Belgium and Iraq and the CTBTO Executive Secretary made a joint appeal on the eve of the Singapore Summit meeting between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States of America: "Joint Appeal by Mr Didier Reynders, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Mr Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq and Dr Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO" (June 2018).
- (2) Promoting complementary approach with the GEM
- In the margins of the "Towards a world without nuclear tests: fulfilling the promise" conference (Brussels, May 2018), a meeting was organized for some members of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM), with, among others, EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament Jacek Bylica, to discuss strategies for advancing the entry into force of the CTBT.
- (3) Promoting various initiatives
- Belgium actively participated in a side event on the CTBT during the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Preparatory Committee in Geneva, with the presence of the Iraqi Permanent Representative in Geneva (April 2018).
 - The Co-Coordinator supported the Ninth CTBT Ministerial Meeting organized by the Friends of the CTBT – Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands – held in New York on 27 September

2018. The meeting also adopted a joint ministerial statement, endorsed by Belgium and Iraq, making a universal political appeal for the early entry into force of the Treaty.

- Belgium actively participated in a side event on the CTBT and DPRK during the NPT Preparatory Committee in New York (May 2019).
- Belgium published the “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” (WP 28) working document on the occasion of the NPT Preparatory Committee in New York. This document was co-sponsored by Iraq, and several Annex 2 and non-Annex 2 States (May 2019).

(4) Raising awareness among stakeholders and citizens

- The Permanent Representatives of Belgium and Iraq in Vienna participated as panelists in several events on the CTBT.
- The Permanent Representative of Belgium in Vienna held a briefing on the Article XIV process, followed by a question and answer session with members of the CTBTO Youth Group at the Vienna International Centre in the margins of the 2nd CTBT Science Diplomacy Symposium (June 2018). The ambassadors explained to the young people interested in the CTBT about the significance of the CTBT in the nuclear disarmament agenda and the role of youth in promoting CTBT ratification and, more broadly, nuclear disarmament.
- Belgium published several press releases on the issue of the CTBT with an appeal to the Annex 2 States to join the Treaty and allow its entry into force.

3. Reflecting on the wide range of activities conducted throughout their tenure, the Co-Coordination have made their observations as follows:

- The vast majority of the international community has recognized that the entry into force of the CTBT is a practical and pragmatic way to advance nuclear disarmament as envisaged in the NPT. Furthermore, the Treaty plays a critical role in responding to the challenge posed by the DPRK by reinforcing the no test norm. Therefore we must finish this “unfinished business”.
- It is important to make continued political commitments and efforts to facilitate the signature and ratification of the CTBT by the remaining Annex 2 States. In particular, efforts should be made to approach these States at the highest political level where appropriate and practical, in order to engage decision makers and to encourage further signature and ratification of the Treaty.
- Emphasis should be placed on making joint international efforts to address issues that present obstacles for the remaining Annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT. In this regard, making efforts at a regional level can be instrumental and beneficial to creating an environment conducive to ratification.
- A gradual approach might be taken by non-signatory States, including those of the remaining Annex 2 States, towards their signature of the Treaty. Engaging with the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO by participating as an observer could be a first step towards a signature.

- Enhanced efforts are encouraged for the remaining Annex 2 and other States that have not yet done so to build IMS stations on their territories and transfer data to the International Data Centre. Continued international cooperation in capacity building for National Data Centres, particularly in developing countries, is needed to further strengthen the verification regime for the detection of nuclear testing.
 - The change of position of Annex 2 States regarding the CTBT, though not desired, should not constitute an impediment or a reason for other Annex 2 States not to move towards signature and/or ratification of the Treaty.
4. Two years of Co-Coordiators' activities offered valuable lessons for future activities of the Article XIV process. While the drafting of and subsequent consultations on the Final Declaration towards the 2019 Article XIV conference were among the highlights of the Co-Coordiators' activities, these were just the beginning of their activities. Indeed, experiences and insights were accumulated through their persistent outreach and other promotional activities following the conference, in particular through their close engagement with the remaining Annex 2 and other non-ratifying States. These activities are all the more important for the promotion of the Treaty and allow the Co-Coordiators to move the Treaty forward more actively and effectively.
 5. In this regard, it is worth recalling that paragraph 2 of Article XIV of the Treaty provides that the Article XIV conference "shall examine the extent to which the requirement set out in paragraph 1 has been met and shall consider and decide by consensus what measures consistent with international law may be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of this Treaty." In light of the goal and purpose of the conference stipulated in the Treaty, the conference should provide a useful platform for ratifying and signatory States to discuss and decide on practical and pragmatic ways to promote the ratification process by which to facilitate the Treaty's early entry into force. As more than 20 years have passed since the opening of the Treaty for signature, it is high time to review practices up until now and thereby revitalize the conference mechanism in order to fully advance its objective and renew international commitment to realizing the cause of the Treaty.
 6. As Germany and Algeria have been elected co-presidents of the Eleventh Article XIV conference in 2019, Belgium and Iraq reaffirm their commitment and readiness to work closely with the incoming co-presidents, as well as with other countries to further advocate the noble cause of a comprehensive and global test ban on a nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.