

Why Japan is fully committed to the CTBT

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The CTBT has gone a long way in the de facto prohibition of nuclear testing. While the CTBTO is carrying out its mandate, however, only the CTBT's entry into force will create a legally binding international ban on all forms of nuclear explosions. Japan has therefore wholeheartedly embraced CTBTO Executive Secretary Zerbo's initiative to create the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM).

At the end of August, GEM members gathered in this historic year in Hiroshima, Japan; I was impressed by the energy and creativeness of the members in exploring new ways to convince the eight remaining Annex 2 States¹ to ratify the CTBT so that it can finally enter into force.

I hope that the same spirit will guide the *Article XIV Conference* in September 2015 to facilitate the CTBT's entry into force, which I will co-chair with Erlan Idrissov, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan. Our two countries are natural allies in the fight against nuclear testing, and we are fully committed to leading international efforts to achieve the Treaty's entry into force during our chairmanship from 2015 to 2017.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

FUMIO KISHIDA

has been Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs since 2012. Prior to this, he served as Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Diet Affairs Committee from 2011. From 2008 to 2011, he was Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Space Policy. Previously, he served as Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Quality-of-Life Policy, Science and Technology Policy, and Regulatory Reform, a position he held from 2007. In 2005, he was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Health, Labour and Welfare of the House of Representatives.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a crucial legal tool to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. The adoption of the draft text of the CTBT in 1996 was a sign of the international community's firm determination to ban nuclear testing, and articulated a vision for our future. With the most recent ratification by Angola in March this year, there are currently 183 State Signatories and 164 ratifying States.

The CTBT is underpinned by a robust verification system, the International Monitoring System (IMS), which has already proven its effectiveness on many occasions. Japan supports this system through 10 fully functioning monitoring stations within the country. Japanese scientists have actively been involved in technical aspects of developing the verification system, including their recent participation in the *CTBT: Science*

and Technology 2015 Conference in Vienna in June this year, which helped to further refine the detection of clandestine nuclear tests. Furthermore, Japan has contributed to the development of this global network in the form of voluntary contributions as well as its unique technical training course (Global Seismological Observation Training), which Japan has now been offering for 20 years. To date, 196 experts from 80 countries have been trained and are expected to play key roles in further strengthening the IMS.

The IMS is also valued increasingly for its many spin-off benefits since the data generated by the stations can be used for disaster warning and scientific research. In Japan, where many communities on the Eastern coast are still recovering from the March 2011 tsunami, CTBTO data are used to enhance our early warning systems.

[1] The Annex 2 States are 44 countries that must ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force. They all participated in the negotiation of the CTBT from 1994-1996 and possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time. Eight Annex 2 States still have to ratify: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America.