

## **REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CTBTO FOR STATES IN THE PACIFIC**

**( 21-22 May 2009, Melekeok, Palau)**

### **Statement by Ambassador Herbert Jäger of Austria**

Honourable Minister, Excellencies, distinguished representatives of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO,

First of all I would like to stress how pleased I am to be back in Melekeok for this very important event. In both my capacities – as Austrian Ambassador accredited to Palau, and as representative of the host country of the CTBTO – I would like to thank the Government of Palau wholeheartedly for the warm welcome and hospitality. Let me also thank our friends from the CTBT Secretariat in Vienna for the excellent organisation of this timely workshop.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty constitutes a milestone in the history of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. So far 180 countries have signed and 148 ratified the Treaty. However, ratification of nine countries, which are necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, are still outstanding. Despite the fact that the Treaty has not entered into force yet, it has already become an important and strong international verification framework with more than two thirds of its planned international monitoring facilities already operational.

Together with Costa Rica, Austria has been coordinating the Article XIV process on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Art. XIV Conference) since September 2007. In this capacity we continue raising awareness about the CTBT and the scientific civil applications of its International Monitoring System such as the tsunami early-warning-system. We hope that a better understanding of the overall benefits of the CTBT will help speed up the ratification process and its entry into force. To that end we have sponsored outreach activities in many parts of the world. For the Pacific region, for instance, we already financed a workshop in Samoa last year.

We also co-organized the CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York on 24 September, 2008, at which high-level representatives from more than 90 states, as well as UNSG Ban Ki-moon, former US Defence Secretary William Perry and UN Peace Ambassador Michael Douglas participated. The meeting raised the wider public's awareness about the significance of nuclear disarmament for world security. We are satisfied that since we have assumed the position of the Co-Chair, a considerable number of states, among them Annex II-State Colombia, have ratified the Treaty.

We are also strongly encouraged by the recent commitment by President Obama that he "will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty". We hope that other countries, particularly Annex II-States, will respond to this initiative.

As a strong instrument for non-proliferation the CTBT limits the ability to develop nuclear armament. It provides a firm legal barrier against nuclear testing. It is also a catalyst for multilateral, nuclear disarmament. By addressing security related issues, which could affect entire world regions, the CTBT also serves as a regional confidence and security building measure. The CTBT is a promise, a hope to break the dangerous spiral of the production of nuclear weapons. However, let me underscore that the monitoring network has the potential to develop synergies with other facilities – such as networks for climate change or providing early warning for earthquakes and tsunamis. The Austrian support of CTBTO is just one example of our effort to strengthen the multilateral system. We believe that effective and efficient multilateralism is the best “weapon” of small and medium-sized states.

An urgent entry into force of the CTBT is now required: It would reflect the international support towards multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. It would reduce the climate of distrust penetrating the field of disarmament and contribute to the strengthening of the other regimes such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It would also contribute to the enhancement of human health and the global environment.

In this spirit, I hope that our discussions in the coming two days will contribute to a better understanding of the manifold benefits of the CTBT for the countries in this region and to an early implementation by some of the States represented here today, thereby sending a strong signal to other parts of the world.

Thank you.