

Norway

Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Vienna, 17-18 September 2007

Mr President,

First, let me join the other speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of this Conference.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening this conference, while at the same expressing regret that it was necessary to do so. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was negotiated and opened for signature more than ten years ago. An entry into force of this highly important instrument is long overdue.

Norway welcomes the 14 new States Parties to the CTBT that have joined over the last two years. This proves that the Treaty is mobilising global support. At the same time, while applauding the ratification by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, we note with regret that there is little progress with respect to ratification by other States whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force

Norway encourages all states that have not ratified the CTBT to do so without delay. Norway values the voluntary moratoria on nuclear test explosions observed by several States that have not yet ratified the CTBT. However, such moratoria cannot replace the a legally binding treaty. Pending an entry into force of the CTBT, Norway urges the countries concerned to uphold their moratoria and refrain from any action contrary to the obligations and purpose of the Treaty.

Norway has bilaterally encouraged the countries concerned to ratify the Treaty. Our message has been that an entry into force of the CTBT is crucial in order to strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The CTBT sustains international peace and stability and hence the concerned countries' own national security. It goes without saying that Norway also has advocated full universality in multilateral forums and has supported various resolutions to this end.

In addition, Norway has provided funding to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and other research institution for organising workshops to enhance awareness and understanding of the vital importance of the CTBT.

Mr President,

There can be no doubt that we need to consolidate and further strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We need to restore international consensus. This is what Norway is seeking through the Seven Nation Initiative.

It is imperative that the NPT 2010 Review Process concludes with a positive and forward-looking outcome. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must mutually support each other. We cannot achieve our common aim of a world free of nuclear weapons unless we move forward on the disarmament agenda and implement credible non-proliferation measures.

Progress towards entry into force of the CTBT would greatly facilitate our task. Such a test ban would make it harder for any non-nuclear weapons state to develop nuclear arms. It would send a strong message of the diminishing importance of nuclear arms in security policies. A legally binding CTBT in force would clearly contribute to preventing a nuclear arms renaissance. It would improve the atmosphere in the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Last year, the importance of the CTBT verification system was clearly demonstrated in the wake of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear test. The importance of credible verification cannot be sufficiently underlined. It is therefore essential that the Provisional Technical Secretariat is able to complete and operate the International Monitoring System as stipulated in the Treaty. Independent verification is crucial for its credibility.

My delegation notes with deep concern that not all signatory states are living up to their financial obligations, thereby hampering the ability of the provisional Technical Secretariat to fulfil its mandate. This is not acceptable.

Mr President,

A prime concern is to solve current outstanding proliferation challenges by diplomatic means. While Norway welcomes the recent positive development in the Islamic Republic of Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in the form of an agreed work plan to resolve outstanding issues, my delegation urges Iran to meet the demands set by the international community. A halt in sensitive activities and full transparency would enable negotiations with a view to reaching a political outcome acceptable to all parties concerned. Ratification of the CTBT would be an important confidence-building measure.

Last year the DPRK fundamentally challenged a norm against nuclear testing that is firmly established despite the absence of a legally binding CTBT. When the DPRK announced its intention to carry out nuclear testing, this was deeply deplored by the whole international community. Fortunately, the prospects of resolving this matter diplomatically seem more promising now. My delegation urges the DPRK to make use of this opportunity. Joining the CTBT would be an important step towards a denuclearised Korean Peninsula.

Finally, Mr President, my delegation would like to express Norway's full support for the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat and Executive Secretary Tibor Toth.