



**I T A L Y**

**VI CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF  
THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY**

**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. PROFESSOR VINCENZO SCOTTI**

**UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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**Check against delivery**

Thank you Mister Chairman,

and allow me to extend my thanks to all the participants in this meeting. Today, the Final Declaration will send a powerful political signal, confirming our unwavering commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), thirteen years after its opening to signature.

Let me reaffirm Italy's strong support to the Treaty. At the multilateral level, my Country is fully engaged in the common endeavor aimed at promoting further steps, to overcome the current stalemate, and ultimately achieve the CTBT entry into force. I am here to convey my Government will and determination to extend universally the nuclear test ban.

In 2009 Italy has the honour to chair the G-8 and a statement on non proliferation was adopted by G-8 Leaders at the L' Aquila summit.

It welcomes the announcement made by the President of the United States of America that he has decided to seek ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); at the same time the G-8 Leaders will intensify their efforts towards the early entry into force and universality of the CTBT, as one of the principal instruments of the international security architecture and a key measure of non-proliferation and disarmament.

We believe that this message should be echoed and relaunched by this Conference to stimulate the political debate in all Countries which are close to sign or to ratify the CTBT, particularly those States listed in Annex II of the Treaty.

The CTBT is still a pillar of non proliferation. The complete ban on testing will make it more difficult for States and terrorist organizations alike to reach the threshold of military nuclear capabilities. It will also make it more difficult to develop more advanced nuclear weapons. Therefore, it deserves the highest political priority. The voluntary moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions has to become permanent, legally binding and effectively verifiable, in order to enhance international peace and security and to prevent the uncontrolled dissemination of nuclear materials and technology.

To this purpose, my Country actively participates, at national level, to the CTBT "International Monitoring System" and it has expanded its national structure to support the implementation of the Treaty. Italy also organized significant international events to promote the entry into force of CTBT; the last of these Conferences, in April, attended by President Gorbachev, Secretary Shultz, Secretary Perry and Senator Nunn, encouraged the debate on the necessity of a comprehensive test ban within the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mister Chairman,

The nuclear test announced by North Korea on 25 May 2009 has been a grave cause of regret all over the world, particularly as it happened at a time when the perspectives for progress on nuclear disarmament were far better than at any time in the recent past. It caused a feeling of disillusion and insecurity especially in the area surrounding the Korean peninsula. We strongly condemned this act and we are convinced that it requires a firm reaction, ultimately leading to a growing adherence to the Treaty.

We know the difficulties looming over the CTBT: they are deep in some Countries and some of them are rooted in the history of some regions. Some of these areas deserve special efforts, aimed specifically at the nuclear test ban, in order to prevent proliferation threats and to overcome the present obstacles with a patient dialogue and balanced initiatives.

The President of the United States announced the engagement to pursue the US ratification of the CTBT; we are confident that the achievement of this goal will ultimately encourage the final success of the whole process. At the same time, we believe that also other key Countries, with advanced nuclear capacity, can give individually political impulse to the ratification of the Treaty.

The document before us underlines our collective resolve – reiterated at the 2007 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT – to spare no efforts to encourage further adherence to the Treaty. Furthermore, it recognizes that the CTBT Treaty verification mechanism would be capable of bringing scientific and civil benefits (including in the field of early warning and alert systems for natural disasters), which could be shared in the common interest of the international community.

For these reasons Italy lends its convinced support to the Final Declaration.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.