



IRELAND

Statement by

Mr. Peter Power T.D.

**Minister of State at the
Department of Foreign Affairs**

Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

New York 24-25 September 2009

Joint Presidents of the Conference,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ireland fully associates itself with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I congratulate you on your election as Joint Presidents of this, the Sixth Article XIV Conference of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. I would also like to express my country's appreciation of the work done by Ambassador Tibor Tóth and his staff in the Preparatory Commission for their ongoing work in preparing for the implementation of the Treaty.

This Conference provides us with an important platform from which to underline our continuing determination to see the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. By aiming to hamper the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, the CTBT is one of the essential pillars in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. Its entry into force would significantly strengthen the international security architecture built upon the foundation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Our conference is taking place at a time of welcome change in the world of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For the first time in many years there is hope that real and substantial progress can be made towards the entry into force of the CTBT. It is thirteen years to the month since the Treaty was adopted (in September 1996) and it is time – past the time – for it to enter into force. The world has waited long enough. Since we met in Vienna two years ago the number of signatories to the Treaty has increased by four to 181, while those ratifying stands at 148. While this progress is to be welcomed, we can not rest on our laurels. The real challenge – as we all know - is to ensure the remaining nine Annex 2 States who have not yet ratified do so without further delay.

The provocative nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in May highlights yet again the urgency of having a test ban treaty in force at the earliest opportunity. When this Conference last convened in 2007 the DPRK had conducted a

nuclear explosion the previous year. Shortly after that test the DPRK returned to the Six Party talks which it had abandoned. Today, the situation is arguably worse as Pyongyang has conducted a second nuclear test but is now outside the talks.

We call upon the DPRK to return to the Six-Party Talks immediately and without preconditions. We urge the DPRK to abandon and completely dismantle any nuclear weapons-related programme in a transparent and irreversible manner. The DPRK must comply unconditionally and without delay with all its international obligations as set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and its IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

If there is one positive outcome to have emerged from the DPRK's nuclear test it is that the International Monitoring System (IMS) demonstrated the considerable progress it has made as an effective and reliable means of ensuring verification with the Treaty's provisions. This should help to reassure those who have expressed concern in the past about the efficacy of the System.

Joint Presidents,

Ireland is encouraged by and warmly welcomes the commitment made by President Obama to "immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty". Addressing the UN General Assembly on Wednesday the President readily acknowledged the stark reality that the threat of proliferation is growing in scope and complexity. If we fail to act, he said, we would invite nuclear arms races in every region, and the prospect of wars and acts of terror on a scale that we can hardly imagine. Chilling words. The presence of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at this Conference underlines the determination of the United States to act now to prevent this scenario coming to pass. The United States has an important leadership role to play in encouraging the universalisation of this Treaty. Nonetheless, we urge those States not to wait for the US to act but to show leadership themselves in moving to a world where the testing of nuclear devices is unacceptable.

While the CTBT is an essential element of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture it is not, of course, the only one. The CTBT is inextricably linked with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a treaty which Ireland has always championed. The 2000 NPT Review Conference listed the entry into force of the CTBT as the first of the 13 Practical Steps necessary for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Progress in ratification of the CTBT by the remaining Annex II States would enhance the prospects for a successful NPT Review Conference next year by demonstrating empirical progress on past commitments. It would underline that Review Conferences are serious fora where States sign up to commitments and then deliver on them, and not simply talking shops as some have suggested.

The process of change I have referred to has made itself felt in another important non-proliferation sector too. Following years of paralysis the Conference on Disarmament finally agreed a work programme in May this year. An important part of that programme is the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Like the CTBT an FMCT is an indispensable element towards bringing the production of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium to an end. Ireland warmly welcomed the adoption of the comprehensive Programme of Work on 29 May 2009 and regrets that its implementation will not begin before the end of the 2009 session. We look forward to the early commencement of substantive work in 2010.

Ireland welcomes too the commitments by Presidents Obama and Medvedev to significantly reduce their countries' nuclear arsenals and to negotiate an agreement to replace START I which expires in December. If concrete progress is to be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons it is essential that the two States holding the bulk of the world's nuclear arsenal lead by action as well as words. As well as being an extremely important initiative in its own right and an example to other nuclear weapons holders, it is also a significant confidence-building measure for non-nuclear-weapon-States helping to reinforce the central bargain of the NPT.

Joint Presidents,

Ireland has consistently been a proponent of a rules-based global order centred on strong international institutions. By standing firm together in this forum in solidarity and determination we increase the pressure on others to do what is right. And what is undeniably right in this context is to secure the entry into force without further delay of the CTBT. We therefore call on those who have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Thank you.