



**STATEMENT BY HON. SHEIKH OMAR FAYE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

**12TH ARTICLE XIV CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY-INTO-
FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (AFC-12)**

23RD – 24TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Distinguished Co - Presidents,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Gambia would like to congratulate Italy and South Africa for assuming the Presidency of the Twelfth Article XIV Conference on facilitating the entry-into-force of the CTBT. We assure Your Excellencies of our support and cooperation in fulfilling your mandate.

We thank the Secretary General, for convening this conference as well as express our appreciation to all state signatories for their presence in this very important meeting.

The Gambia would like to register its special felicitations to our dear Brother, Dr. Lassina Zerbo for his exceptional service to the CTBT. We commend him and his team for the dedication towards promoting the entry-into-force of the CTBT, achieving universalism and adherence to the non-proliferation agenda.

We also wish to congratulate Dr. Rob Floyd on his appointment as Executive Secretary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the Preparatory Commission and assure him of our support.

Co-Presidents,

We stress our support to the final declaration adopted by this meeting and welcome the reaffirmations and measures outlined therein.

The Gambia considers this conference as an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the CTBT and towards the achievement of the objectives of universalism, nuclear disarmament, and non-proliferation, set 25 years ago with the opening for signature of the treaty. The Gambia signed the CTBT on 9th April 2003. We are happy to inform this conference that the National Assembly of The Gambia has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and administrative arrangements are currently being made to prepare and deposit the instrument of ratification with the United Nations Secretary General.

We are cognisant of the fact that one more state ratifying the Treaty is a positive step towards achieving universalism. However, to ensure its entry-into-force, we encourage states that are yet to sign and/or ratify the treaty to do so, especially Annex 2 states.

The need to progress with the entry-into-force of the CTBT is even more important now as the CTBT verification regime and other mechanisms are not only a means of ensuring adherence to a rules-based international system but most importantly as a significant contributor to the elimination of threats to global peace and security. We therefore call on all states to increase the political momentum and work with the PTS towards the entry-into-force of the Treaty.

Co - Presidents,

The Gambia wishes to take this opportunity to register its appreciation to the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for working tirelessly towards increasing the capacity of state signatories on the various issues that fall within the scope of work of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO. Such training programmes are crucial to small states such as ours.

The Gambia's outlook on global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is with a lens of positivity, recognising that despite the challenges of the entry-into-force of the CTBT, significant achievements have been registered. We must therefore proceed with the optimistic view that all efforts, including those outlined in the adopted declaration, will soon lead to the attainment of the objectives of the CTBT.

Thank you