



**CTBTO**  
PREPARATORY COMMISSION

PUTTING AN  
END TO NUCLEAR  
EXPLOSIONS

## **CTBTO REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR STATE SIGNATORIES OF THE AFRICAN REGION**

**Dr Robert Floyd, 31 May 2024**

HE Mr Dawda, Attorney General and Minister for Justice of The Gambia,

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen,

First and foremost, my sincere thanks to The Gambia for hosting this workshop. And for the hospitality and courtesies so generously extended to my team and myself.

When you put your name forward for the honour of leading an international organization, you need a Plan.

“What you want to do if you get the job!”

I made my bid to lead CTBTO back in 2020.

And from the first day behind the desk, I knew what I wanted to do. To push as hard as I could for ‘universalisation’ – every country on Earth signing and ratifying the Treaty.

I am so pleased to be here in The Republic of The Gambia today.

This country was the first to ratify the Treaty after I took up the role. It did so in March 2022.

Since then, because of The Gambia’s leadership, we have seen one more signature and eight more ratifications.

Including two further African ratifications: Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Africa! A mighty continent, standing as one, for a noble cause.

This is Africa, within our Organization: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, or CTBTO, 52 States from Africa have signed the Treaty. Joined its membership. 50 have ratified it.

Africa is doing its job!

Why are we here? Why have you all come, in some cases, a huge distance, to be here today?

Simple! Our world is a far safer place without nuclear weapons tests. And the CTBTO now helps keep us safe.

Before 1996, there were more than 2,000 confirmed nuclear tests.

Some tests were conducted in Africa.

But none were conducted by an African country.

Radioactive traces from all these tests decades ago - especially atmospheric tests - went right round the world.

They are still being traced. Even, sad to say, in African elephants' tusks.

What a difference the CTBT has made!

Before 1996, more than 2,000 nuclear tests.

From September 1996 through to today in 2024?

That is less than one dozen test events.

The science of 1996 was good enough to guarantee that all nuclear explosions could be monitored once a global network of monitoring stations had been built.

Now we have that network. And far better technology.

Streaming in from more than 300 stations. All around the planet, all the time.

States know that the CTBTO's remarkable International Monitoring System (IMS), together with the International Data Centre (IDC), spots anything unexpected or strange really fast.

And tell with great accuracy where it happened.

This is where national contributions play their part.

Right now, Africa's 35 IMS stations are listening to the earth's crust rumbling and groaning. They are streaming their data to Vienna.

Staff from your institutions, your experts, play leading roles in our technical work in Vienna.

African experts participate actively in training and capacity building

And we have more Africans working at the CTBTO than ever before.

Please look out for our job vacancies and training opportunities. Send us lots more good candidates. Men and women!

But it is not all good news. There's still work to be done.

It is frustrating that we make available to all our States Signatories, day and night, streams of rich scientific data.

Yet not long ago, 43 States could not receive or analyse or use this data.

16 of those states were from Africa.

This is why I launched an initiative - NDCs4All - to help establish National Data Centres in all States Signatories.

Once these Centres are set up, many different categories of scientific expertise can gather around them.

Since we launched the initiative, many States including from Africa have requested support to establish NDCs. I hope the others follow soon. `

There is something else that I want to ask!

One very practical point. Our IMS stations – often in remote areas - need maintenance and checking.

It's very helpful for us to have so-called 'facility agreements' with our States Signatories. These help our team in Vienna work through import and customs processes smoothly to support the IMS network.

So, I want to encourage those States hosting IMS facilities that haven't yet signed an agreement with us, please think about doing so!

My team can tell you how your own country might contribute, and explain how these agreements work in practice.

Because the more facility agreements we keep up and working, the more the network benefits. And the better the checks we can run on suspicious events.

Excellencies, colleagues, friends,

The opening for signature of the CTBT, nearly 28 years ago, was a landmark achievement: the culmination of long decades of effort.

Africa played a vital role, helping to build consensus and get the Treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly in New York.

Several African States signed on the first day the Treaty opened for signature.

Beyond that, Africa in 2009 has shown bold solidarity by establishing the African nuclear-weapons-free zone - the Treaty of Pelindaba.

Complete adherence of Africa to the CTBT will support the objectives of your nuclear-weapon-free zone.

I count on your continued support to achieve universalisation both in your continent, and across the world.

I will finish by repeating what I said at the start: Africa is well on its way to standing as one, for the noble cause of the CTBT.

I encourage the four remaining African states to complete ratification. Please see what your own governments are doing to help get this done!

It is a political and moral goal that's second to none: to set up a legally binding ban on nuclear testing for all generations to come.

We owe it to the world's young people.

Particularly here in Africa, where nearly one billion dynamic young people want to live in a safe and peaceful world.

I encourage more young people from Africa to join our CTBTO Youth Group (CYG) and also our Young Professionals Network (YPN).

To close, do make the most of the next two days.

Build contacts with colleagues. Get to know our CTBTO staff here.

Learn what you and your country can do to get the most from participation in our work.

Above all, feel a strong connection to what we do together.

And leave here with the desire to play an even bigger role in our shared ambition: a peaceful and secure world, with no nuclear weapon tests.