

Address by Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai to Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

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Before I begin my remarks, let me express the gratitude of the Government of Canada to you, the UN Secretary-General, the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization [CTBTO] and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs for your efforts to convene this conference.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the states that have signed or ratified the treaty since the last conference in 2011, most notably Indonesia, as well as Brunei, Chad, Guatemala and Niue.

When CTBT [Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty] negotiations took place in Geneva in the mid-1990s, Canada proposed the clause that called for convening this kind of conference as a way to counterbalance the strict requirement of obtaining 44 ratifications by specific countries to achieve entry into force.

I would indeed be curious to find out from the dignitaries that were involved in those negotiations if they ever predicted that this challenge would require these conferences to be held eight times.

The message that I want to deliver today is one that Canada has reiterated since the CTBT opened for signature 17 years ago: countries that have yet to do so must sign and ratify the treaty immediately and without reservation, especially those listed in Annex 2 of the treaty.

In February of this year, the rogue regime in North Korea gave the world a vivid reminder of the threat posed to international stability by nuclear weapons test explosions. Its third nuclear test was immediately condemned by Canada and the broader international community as a provocative and reckless action that undermined regional and international security.

Canada co-sponsored and supports universal implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2094, which imposed further sanctions on North Korea and reiterated support for a political solution to the security situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The treaty's verification system and the technical experts at the CTBTO's headquarters played key roles in the international response to the North Korean nuclear test. The organization's seismic monitoring stations in the region immediately detected the

explosion. Its experts in Vienna provided timely and detailed data to the treaty's state signatories to inform their national assessments of what transpired.

Many weeks later, atmospheric monitoring stations in the region detected radioactive evidence that was traced back to the location of the test, confirming that it was indeed nuclear in nature.

The capabilities of the CTBT's verification system have, time and again, proved their worth. We call on all states that have yet to do so to make the necessary arrangements with the CTBTO to construct the remaining monitoring stations, especially in regions that have sizable gaps in coverage.

Canada achieved full certification of its 16 monitoring stations and laboratories in 2009, but our interest in strengthening the CTBT's verification regime has not stopped there. At last September's CTBT ministerial meeting in New York, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister announced the signing of a contribution arrangement with the CTBTO to provide airborne radiation detection equipment and technical training to strengthen the CTBTO's ability to conduct on-site inspections.

I am pleased to report that this equipment was delivered in Vienna on September 5, 2013, and will be available for use during the integrated field exercise for on-site inspections that will be hosted by Jordan in December 2014. It remains Canada's intention to explore further ways to advance the treaty's verification regime.

Despite the long delay in achieving entry into force of the CTBT, there are a number of reasons to be hopeful that our goal will be achieved sooner rather than later. In June, U.S. President Barack Obama reiterated, in a speech in Berlin, his administration's desire to reintroduce the treaty in the Senate for its advice and consent.

The new CTBTO executive secretary, Lassina Zerbo, had a positive visit with leaders in China shortly after the beginning of his term. He also announced the creation of a group of eminent persons to assist in the promotion of the treaty and its entry into force.

Let me conclude by reiterating Canada's strong support for the CTBT. We will continue to do our part, both nationally and in concert with our international partners, including the G-8, to finally realize the goal of a fully in-force treaty.

Thank you.