

*Netherlands
final version*

Intervention of H.E. Justus de Visser,
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Madam President, Mr President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this Conference. I would like to assure you of the full support of the Netherlands in your efforts to ensure this Conference is a success. Moreover, I would also like to express the appreciation of my government to the excellent work that has been carried out by Australia, in their capacity as previous Article XIV coördinator.

Co-chairs,

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was opened for signature in 1996, now eleven years ago. Despite the limited progress in the ratification process since the last Article XIV Conference in 2007, the Netherlands still believes that the Treaty **MUST** enter into force and we will commit ourselves strongly to achieve that goal. A ban on nuclear tests is in our view an essential step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. A moratorium on nuclear testing is good but not enough: without a **legally binding** treaty, the door to further nuclear testing is still not completely shut. In my statement, I will:

- indicate why the Treaty is so important, today even more than ever;
- and I will highlight the steps that need to be taken in order to promote further ratifications. Steps that not only my country must take and will take, but that need to be taken by all of us!

Why is the CTBT is so important?

The Treaty remains the cornerstone of our efforts to hold back the further spread of nuclear weapons. It is also a vital link in the network of

mutually reinforcing treaties, arrangements and regimes which deal with weapons of mass destruction. The Netherlands is a strong supporter of international law as the foundation for relations among states and believes that it is the best way to guarantee that those relations will be stable and beneficial in the long term. This is why the Netherlands is working hard to make the next Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in 2010 a success and why we remain committed to the wider perspective of **treaty-based** non-proliferation and disarmament. All of us must work together and ensure that treaties on weapons of mass destruction are not eroded from within.

Unfortunately, existing disarmament and non-proliferation treaties are under pressure. The prospects for developing new international law to limit the threat of nuclear weapons seem limited. At the same time international tensions related to non-proliferation are rising. This includes difficulties with particular countries, growing worries about eventual acts of nuclear terrorism but also the side effects of the "renaissance of nuclear energy".

Co-chairs, that is precisely why the CTBT's contribution to our nuclear non-proliferation treaty-based system is important. We **MUST** continue to invest in the ratification process and redouble our efforts to overcome the current deadlock in establishing a legally binding framework to ban nuclear testing.

What do we need to do until the Treaty enters into force?

Perseverance and political will are needed to promote the CTBT's entry into force. The 177 countries that have signed the treaty give it a solid

basis. The Netherlands is doing more than its share in trying to increase the number of ratifying countries. We are honoured that a former Dutch Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, who has been working closely as Special Representative on behalf of the Ratifying States with the coordinators of this conference for several years, stands ready to continue his work. It is my pleasure and honour to announce my Government's readiness to finance the activities of the Special Representative until 2009.

Futhermore, we will have to use our bilateral contacts to convince the countries who have not signed and/or ratified to do so. Unfortunately, the group of non-ratifying countries is not homogeneous and the approach taken cannot be 'one size fits all'. We do realise that the CTBT may not enter into force very soon. But the positive side is that the CTBTO is operating and the verification network is being expanded. We must continue to build the network and include states which have not yet ratified the Treaty. While we may be critical of the countries which have not yet ratified, we must also acknowledge that, for now, they can help to ensure the Treaty's future by providing funding for the CTBTO and by allowing more parts of the verification network to be established and become operational. Thanks to the treaty and the fact that the Signatory States have agreed on a moratorium there is now a strong international norm against nuclear testing.

Madam President, Mr President,

The Netherlands will continue to work towards entry into force of the CTBT and it will provide resources to that end. Hard work and persistence are needed. In view of the horrors that weapons of mass destruction can unleash to both people and the global environment, we believe that the international community has a contractual, and not only a

moral obligation to work towards elimination of nuclear tests. Continued support for the CTBTO and the establishment of the verification network are of paramount importance in ensuring our long-term well being.