

CONFERENCE FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE EARLY ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY

NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2009

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. YVES LETERME, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
BELGIUM

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While fully aligning myself with the intervention made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union, allow me to highlight the particular importance Belgium attaches to this conference and to the promotion of an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. To have this meeting here and now is politically very relevant. No one in this room can doubt about the special momentum, when the Security Council at the highest political level is addressing the very issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Many of us in this hall, among them our respected co-chairs France and Morocco, have been working patiently and arduously to promote the CTBT, one of the legal pillars on which the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime is based. Now seems to be the time to invest in real change, to expect real progress. 2010 should be the year to harvest the results of our joint investment.

I welcome the renewed commitment on the part of the United States administration to take the CTBT ratification process further towards a final ban for the testing of nuclear weapons. The US participation in this very conference is significant. Also China is to be complimented on its renewed expression of interest in the Treaty. We should encourage and actively support this process, pointing out to those that are to decide on this, that ratification of the CTBT is a tangible contribution to building a safer and more secure world. Moreover, this act of political courage will inspire others, whose ratification is equally needed to bring the Treaty into force, to embark on a similar positive road. Belgium calls for the universal ratification of the CTBT and the completion of its verification regime as well as for the dismantling as soon as possible of all nuclear testing facilities in an

transparent manner, thus making the present test moratorium decided by some States truly irreversible.

Our appeal to those States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty should focus on the benefits that the global community will derive from it and on the operational capabilities of the international monitoring system installed and managed by the CTBTO. The completion and full operational readiness of the Treaty's unique verification regime will convince all of us that a CTBT into force can and will make a real difference in security policy and cooperation. The world has been closely monitoring the highly irresponsible explosion announced by the DPRK as a nuclear test earlier this year in an effort to draw the right security conclusions from it. This was no easy task but the information and analysis provided by the CTBT's verification system and its experts have offered a valuable contribution. Belgium encourages the Provisional Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts to further develop its verification tools, introducing and confirming new techniques. We also have to move forward towards a robust on-site inspection regime upon which full verification ultimately depends.

The Treaty's verification technologies and its wide international network also offer us a platform for scientific cooperation in a variety of civilian applications. Belgium is interested in further exploring the full potential of our joint investment in these areas, such as tsunami warning and prevention of other natural disasters and unwelcome effects of global climate change.

To ensure the viability of the Treaty, we all must honor our financial commitments. Belgium invests more than 800.000 € yearly and is resolved to maintain this contribution even at times of great financial strain and budgetary restrictions. We also take part in the Treaty's promotional activities both nationally and through the EU. That is because we believe in the CTBT and fully stand behind its objectives. We want all States to believe in this Treaty and to contribute to its effective functioning, also by fully cooperating with the Organization whose devoted staff and Executive Secretary I salute. We want all States to be able to benefit from the increased security for all that will be the result of the Treaty's entry into force.

Thank you for your attention.