

(Translated from French)

**Eighth session of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference)**

New York, 27 September 2013
Speech delivered by H.E Ms Marion Paradas
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations and International
Organizations in Vienna

Mr President,
Mr. Executive Secretary,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two years ago, France, jointly with Morocco, passed on the Presidency of the Article XIV Conference to Sweden and Mexico.

Allow me, to begin with, to thank these two countries for their commitment and their efforts that have enabled a new accession by Niue, and several ratifications, including by Indonesia – an Annex 2 State – as well as Guatemala, Brunei and Chad, and most recently Guinea Bissau and Irak.

I also wish to congratulate the two new President-designate countries, Hungary and Indonesia, which are about to ensure the coordination of this Eighth Conference.

May they be assured of our full support throughout the two coming years.

France also welcomes the Final Declaration adopted at this Conference and fully subscribes to the statement by the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, delivered on behalf of the European Union and the States that have supported it.

Mr President,

The serious threat to international peace and security constituted by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is more than ever a reality, as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear crises have recently shown again.

In this connection, the nuclear test conducted on 12 February 2013 by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea came as a reminder, following the tests of 2006 and 2009, of the urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) whose purpose is precisely to prohibit, universally and irrevocably, all forms of nuclear explosions in order to make a test.

France has been resolutely committed to supporting the CTBT, ever since its adoption. It was among the first States that signed the Treaty in September 1996 and it ratified it in April 1998.

Allow me to emphasize that our legal commitment has, moreover, been accompanied by “strong actions” to support the purpose of the Treaty, as well as further developments.

Our nuclear test centre in the Pacific was dismantled permanently in 1998 in a transparent manner open to the international community. We are, in actual fact, the only nuclear power that has made such a commitment.

This measure was moreover concurrent with a significant reduction of our nuclear arsenal and the cessation of the production of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium. The launch of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) as an essential supplement to the CTBT is now a priority with a view to enabling a dual qualitative and quantitative limitation on nuclear arsenals and hence the continuation of international disarmament efforts.

Mr President

Since its signature in 1996, the CTBT has been recognized de facto as an international standard for the prohibition of nuclear testing, a standard that is now virtually universal and recognized today by 183 States Signatories and 161 Ratifying States. In this regard, we welcome the fact that five actions are devoted to the CTBT in the Final Document of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The CTBT has also turned out to be an invaluable tool in the prevention and management of natural and accidental disasters by making a decisive contribution to tsunami early warning systems and the detection of radioactive contamination.

Yet the progress made towards universalization should also prompt us to go further by establishing the CTBT as a fully universal and legally binding standard.

At the diplomatic level, the new Hungarian and Indonesian Presidents can once again count on our full support to work for the entry into force of the CTBT in all formats – whether multilateral, regional, or in the form of bilateral demarches as we have done, for example, in the Francophone space.

Mr President,

In addition to their commitment and the awareness efforts implemented by the successive Presidents of Article XIV Conferences together with States Signatories, the gradual establishment of a robust, effective and deterrent verification system is in our view a sine qua non for the entry into force of the CTBT.

We must therefore ensure the rapid completion – and maintenance – of the International Monitoring System, which is the true keystone of the verification regime. The planned conduct next year of a major inspection exercise (Integrated Field Exercise (IFE) 14) is also an important stage in the strengthening of a verification system capable of detecting the conduct of nuclear tests anywhere.

Since the adoption of the Treaty in 1996 and the setting up of the Preparatory Commission, my country has made available to the Commission its expertise and scientific resources relating to all the technologies that are necessary to establish the verification system and ensure its concrete implementation. In view of this, we host 16 stations on French national territory and a radionuclide laboratory, and we cooperate very closely with third countries.

Mr President,

I am pleased for this opportunity to commend the outstanding work and dedication of the staff of the Provisional Technical Secretariat, in particular at the time of the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on 12 February 2013.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Ambassador Tibor Toth for his unmitigated commitment in the service of the Organization, and to the newly appointed Executive Secretary Mr. Lassina Zerbo whose in-depth knowledge of the CTBTO and expertise are invaluable assets for achieving the priority objective of the CTBT's entry into force.

In this respect, I would like to welcome the creation by Mr Lassina Zerbo of the CTBT Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) to which France intends to contribute actively. By conducting targeted dialogue with the Annex II States, by promoting the CTBT objectives at all appropriate levels and by explaining the activities carried out by the Preparatory Commission, this group will, we are sure, contribute significantly to re-launching the Treaty ratification process.

In conclusion, allow me to stress the fact that, in a world undermined by proliferation crises which fuel regional instability and threaten geostrategic equilibria, the entry into force of the CTBT at the earliest opportunity, which we call for, would represent a significant contribution to the international architecture whose keystone is the NPT and thus strengthen the non-proliferation regime and disarmament process, guaranteeing our collective security.

Thank you.