



Permanent Mission of Italy
to the International Organisations
Vienna

CTBT 20th Anniversary Meeting

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ITALY

Statement by Ambassador Filippo Formica

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Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like first of all to thank you, the Executive Secretary, Lassina Zerbo and his team for organizing this meeting.

I very much agree with the point made by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, just a few weeks ago here that *“this 20th anniversary of the CTBTO is not a celebration but a reminder of work remaining, it is a call to action”*. It is also an occasion to look back at twenty years of work of the Preparatory Commission and the Provisional Technical Secretariat.

In fact much has been achieved in these twenty years of provisional operation:

- The verification system is 90% complete
- Nuclear experiments have been conducted by only 2 States in the 20th Century and by only one State in the 21st Century
- There is a widespread consciousness that nuclear explosions have a devastating effect on people and the environment.

Throughout, Italy has contributed to promoting the Treaty and the Organization:

- We have ratified the Treaty in 1998

- The auxiliary seismic station in Sicily is certified and operates regularly as does Italy's National Data Center
- Italy is among the top contributors to the Organization
- And, last but not least, I like to mention the recent offer by Italy of a prototype Cooperating National Facility.

There is wide agreement in considering the entry into force of the CTBT as the first measure to adopt on the way to realizing the goal of a safer world for all and without nuclear weapons.

The first of the "Thirteen Practical Steps" of the 2000 NPT Review Conference is about the CTBT and it recognizes "*The importance and urgency to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty*".

The 2008 "Five Point Action Plan" of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stresses the CTBT. In particular, it recognizes that "*we need new efforts to bring the CTBT into force*".

Lately, the 2015 NPT Review Conference has registered strong consensus on the CTBT and the need of its entry into force and its universalization.

So there is a wide spread agreement on this.

However, some argue that the present moment characterized by multiple security challenges is not appropriate for promoting the entry into force of the Treaty: we do not agree.

On the contrary, we believe that the existing security tensions provide a strong political argument for giving new impulse to efforts for the early entry into force of the CTBT. A Treaty in force would contribute to reducing security concerns and

tensions thereby creating a political environment more conducive to taking further concrete steps in advancing nuclear disarmament.

It is high time to go back to the fundamentals. CTBT entry into force remains the number one priority.

In this regard, the “remaining Annex II States” have a special responsibility. Today, on this solemn occasion, Italy renews the appeal to these States to “*sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions to achieve the early entry into force of the Treaty*”. The alternative could well be not the continuation of the status quo, but rather a sliding back towards the resumption of nuclear tests and new arms race. It is a scenario that we must avoid at all costs. What is needed is a renewed political will that will put aside short-term considerations in favor of a higher view of our shared security and common human destiny.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.
