

South Africa

Statement to the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV), New York, 27 September 2013

Presidents,

Let me join others in congratulating you on your election to preside over this eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and appreciate the assiduous work done by the Preparatory Commission in preparing for this Conference.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Executive Secretary, Mr. Tibor Toth, who has led the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO with diligence and personal fervour over the last eight years, for his untiring commitment, dedication and professionalism in executing the mandate of the Commission to universalize the Treaty and ensure operational readiness of the Treaty's verification regime. In the same vein, my delegation extends its warm welcome to the newly elected Executive Secretary, Dr Lassina Zerbo and assures him of South Africa's full support and cooperation.

South Africa associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Presidents,

After 17 years since the CTBT was opened for signature and convening the eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into force of the CTBT, my delegation is of the view that immediate action is called for. The entry into force of the CTBT is a pressing goal and a non-negotiable commitment of all States Signatories aimed at achieving a world without nuclear weapons. In view of our efforts vested in this Treaty, we must without delay, live up to this responsibility and collectively work to achieve the entry into force of this important pillar of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Presidents,

My delegation welcomes the progress made towards universalization of the Treaty. The recent ratifications by four States, Guatemala, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Chad, specifically recognizing ratification of the Treaty by Indonesia, as an Annex 2 State is particularly welcomed by my delegation. We call upon all Annex 2 states whose signature and ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force, but who have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty without any further delay.

South Africa remains fully committed to the Treaty's basic obligations. We are encouraged by the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, reaffirming "the essential role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime". We reiterate our call to all States to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of

the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty pending its entry into force, in particular with regard to the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

My delegation strongly condemned the announcement of a third nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 February this year. Bearing in mind the catastrophic consequences to humanity, should any nuclear weapons be used in attack, my delegation urges all parties concerned in the region not to exacerbate the situation and return to the negotiation table in the framework of the Six-Party-Talks. Only a negotiated solution will bring peace, security and stability to the region.

Presidents,

The outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference inter alia, reaffirmed the vital importance of the entry into force of the CTBT, as a core element of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as the determination of nuclear weapon States to abide by their respective moratoriums on nuclear tests explosions pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

However, my delegation continues to be concerned about certain statements by the nuclear-weapon States that seem to point to their desire to indefinitely retain nuclear weapons. As long as these weapons exist others will aspire to possess them. We continue to believe that the early entry into force of the CTBT is indeed one of the practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and paragraphs 3 and 4(c) of the 1995 Decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", which aim at the complete, irreversible and verifiable disarmament, a world without nuclear weapons.

Presidents,

Through the entry into force of the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, the majority of African States have taken a decisive step in making the African continent a region free of nuclear weapons. States Parties are committed under this Treaty not to test any nuclear explosive devices and to prohibit the testing of any nuclear explosive device on their territories.

Moreover Presidents, my delegation is pleased with progress thus far on the almost completed International Monitoring System (IMS), as well as the functioning of the International Data Centre (IDC) to ensure operational readiness of the Treaty. We appreciate the additional functions of the CTBT verification system, which could prove to be beneficial in scientific and civil applications, including disaster alert systems.

In conclusion, Presidents, South Africa will continue to work with States in the region and internationally for the CTBT to enter into force without further delay and welcomes the establishment of a high-level group to engage in promoting the universality of the Treaty.

Thank you.