

**CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE  
COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT),  
3 – 5 SEPTEMBER 2003**

**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA**

Mr President,

I join other speakers before me in congratulating you on your election to preside over this conference. Please be assured of my delegation's support for your efforts in steering this conference to a successful conclusion.

South Africa has long believed that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's call for the cessation of all nuclear weapons test explosions and all other nuclear explosions by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, distinguishes it as an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In this regard, South Africa remains a strong supporter of the CTBT and signed the Treaty on the day it was opened for signature, namely on 24 September 1996. South Africa also served as the first Chairperson of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and will host five International Monitoring System (IMS) facilities in South Africa.

However, Mr President, the failure of the Treaty to enter into force remains a matter of serious concern to my delegation. Not only does the failure to enter into force prevent the implementation of the Treaty, but it also casts doubt on the international community's seriousness to commit itself to an instrument of nuclear non-proliferation and of nuclear disarmament that would strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

As my delegation has stated at previous Article XIV Conferences, these Conferences are convened at the request of the majority of States that have already deposited their instruments of ratification in respect of the Treaty, while States Signatories are invited to attend as observers. The progress made at these Conferences should not be subject to – or depend on – those States that have not ratified the CTBT. In this regard my delegation remains concerned that the Final Declarations of previous Conferences – and indeed also of this present Conference – have not adequately addressed the failure of the CTBT to enter into force.

Mr President,

South Africa remains fully committed to the letter and spirit of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is for this reason that we must also question the effectiveness of these Conferences as a practical measure to expedite entry into force of the Treaty. In particular, we should guard against these Conferences leading to a sense of complacency, or to an attitude of "business as usual". In my delegation's view it would serve little purpose in convening Article XIV Conferences ad infinitum if the necessary political will does not exist that would allow entry into force of the Treaty.

Mr President,

As you are aware, my delegation actively participated in the negotiations and drafting of the present Final Declaration. Whilst we agree that as a consensus document the Final Declaration will inevitably not satisfy all States, we nevertheless regret the fact

that the current draft that we are working on is not a more dynamic document for this – the third Article XIV Conference – than the Declarations we produced here in Vienna in 1999 and in New York in 2001. In this context, I should make it clear that South Africa sees an inextricable link between the CTBT and the NPT nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations, including the agreements reached at the NPT Conferences in 2000 and 1995.

In conclusion, Mr President,

My delegation commends those States that have signed and ratified the CTBT, because it has the potential of making a meaningful contribution to the strengthening of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As my delegation pointed out at the last Conference in 2001, we believe that progress in one area of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament often facilitates progress in other areas. Similarly, however, it is also true that obstacles in one area may undermine achievements in other areas.

The same holds true for the CTBT. If it does not enter into force, it will weaken the non-proliferation and disarmament machinery and deal a blow to the international community's quest to achieve a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. We must not allow this to happen, as we would be sending a signal that we had the opportunity to act, but failed to do so because we could not act together for the common good.

thank you, Mr President.