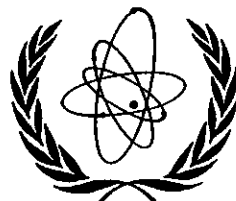


STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

**THIRD CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY
INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY**

**Vienna
3 September 2003**

**Mohamed ElBaradei
Director General**



INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

STATEMENT TO THE THIRD CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

The Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is being held at a time of major challenges to the nuclear arms control and disarmament regime.

A verified, permanent, global ban on all types of nuclear explosive tests has been a key item on the international security agenda for nearly half a century. More than 2,000 nuclear explosive detonations have taken place since 1945, with the most recent ones in 1998. The CTBT has been characterized as “the longest sought, hardest fought prize in the history of arms control”. The Treaty, when implemented, will prohibit all nuclear explosions, in all environments, for all time. It will curb the development and testing of new, more advanced and more dangerous nuclear weapons, and will limit the possibilities for further nuclear proliferation. The Treaty will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive International Monitoring System to provide independent, impartial verification of compliance.

The CTBT, along with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and a future Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons and Other Nuclear Explosive Devices (FMCT), forms an essential element of a network of negotiated, global treaties that will strengthen international efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and to promote nuclear disarmament — leading in time hopefully to a world without nuclear weapons.

In the meantime, with the early entry into force of the CTBT, it would indeed be a significant achievement if this new century were to remain free of any nuclear test explosions. In this context, I encourage all signatory States to ratify the CTBT, and all those States that have yet to sign to do so and to ratify the Treaty, as soon as possible — so that another crucial pillar can be raised to support the edifice of global nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament norms.