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

**Statement by
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic**

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Mr Secretary General,
Distinguished Co- Presidents,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to mention that Greece fully associates herself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

This Article XIV Conference is another important occasion for all of us to renew our full commitment to the principles and goals of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We consider, as it has been reaffirmed by the last NPT Conference in 2010, the CTBT as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and an indispensable tool to prevent nuclear proliferation. We believe, also, like most of the countries in this room, that the early entry into force of the CTBT is a crucial step towards nuclear disarmament and should thus be regarded as an absolute priority in our ongoing efforts for global stability, international security and the ultimate goal of a nuclear free world.

Greece was among the first states to sign the CTBT, in 1996 and ratified it soon thereafter in 1999. From the outset, we have been firmly committed to promoting the universalisation of the Treaty and its entry into force, and it is towards this direction that we now need to intensify our efforts. In order to accomplish tangible results in this undertaking, political decisions must be taken at the highest level, triggering the necessary momentum needed to bring this task to fruition.

We value the current declared voluntarily unilateral moratoria on nuclear test explosions, and urge the states to continue in this path, but these are not, and cannot, be seen as substitute for the full implementation of the obligations contained in the CTBT.

Recent developments, such as the new START treaty and the positive outcome of the last NPT Review Conference (May 2010) have given new impetus to nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless the CTBT has not yet entered into force. Since last year only one country has ratified the treaty bringing the number to 154. and none yet of the Annex II states. Reinvigorating the process on pushing for the entry into force of the CTBT is today more critical than at any time in the past. We therefore believe that diplomatic efforts, bilateral talks and international meetings for this purpose should be intensified.

In this vein, the Conference on a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East, scheduled to take place in 2012, following a decision of the 8th NPT Review Conference, is today probably more important than ever. The success of the relevant seminar that took place in Brussels some months ago gave out some indications of hope. A constructive WMDFZ Conference would act as a precursor for speeding up ratification of the CTBT and contribute to either diminishing the number of the states that have not ratified the Treaty or, ideally, to its entry into force.

Until and for the entry into force we should continue to expand the Treaty's verification system which has already proven effective through the welcomed efforts of the CTBTO. Effective verification would help persuade states to comply.

Additionally, Greece attaches great importance to further use of the data and the scientific knowledge produced by the verification system for a variety of civil purposes especially in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters.

We would like to add our voice to that of the vast majority of nations and call upon these states which have not yet acceded to the Treaty to sign and ratify it without further delay, in particular the remaining Annex II countries.

I am convinced that this Conference will succeed in demonstrating the determination of all who are committed to promote the entry into force of CTBT.

More importantly, in parallel to the efforts for universalisation of the CTBT, we should set aside long-lasting sources of uncertainty and mutual misunderstandings and focus on the ultimate goal of strengthening global peace and security in a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you