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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE  
ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE  
OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY  
Vienna, 3 September 2003**

*Delivered by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa,  
Director General, United Nations Office at Vienna*

I send my greetings to all who have gathered to examine ways and means to accelerate the entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. You meet at a time of heightened international concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Progress in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is urgent.

The CTBT creates an international norm prohibiting nuclear test explosions, or any other nuclear explosions for military, civilian or any other purposes. It thus effectively constrains the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, and the development of new types of weapons.

At two previous meetings of this kind – in Vienna in 1999, and in New York in 2001 – the ratifying and signatory States reaffirmed their commitment to the Treaty's basic obligations. They agreed to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT, pending its entry into force. And they affirmed the importance of universal adherence to the CTBT. It is encouraging that, following the 2001 Conference, there has been a significant increase in signatures and ratifications. The Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT issued in September 2002 was a welcome restatement of the commitment of Ministers from around the world to the vision of the Treaty.

The Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization and the Provisional Technical Secretariat have continued to promote the goal of universal adherence. Progress has also been made in setting up the international monitoring system, the international data centre, and the global communication infrastructure. These efforts give confidence that the verification regime envisaged in the CTBT would be ready by the time the Treaty entered into force.

But obstacles still remain to the entry into force of the Treaty. Indeed, seven years have already passed since the CTBT was opened for signature. Our world can ill afford to fail, or even to be unduly delayed, in achieving a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Delay increases the risk that nuclear testing might resume. And it jeopardizes efforts to take further steps towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.

I therefore call upon all States that have yet to sign or ratify the Treaty to do so without delay. Given the latest developments, I particularly direct this call to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as to the other eleven States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to enter into force. It is essential that this important norm against nuclear proliferation and the further development of nuclear weapons becomes operational. Until it does so, it is crucial that all relevant States maintain a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. No nuclear testing must be tolerated under any circumstances.

The entry into force of the CTBT would be a victory for the cause of peace. It cannot come too soon. The United Nations remains firmly committed to helping the world community to achieve that goal.