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Conference on Facilitating the Entry - Into - Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear - Test - Ban Treaty

Statement by
H.E. Dr. Yannis Valinakis
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic

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Mr Chairman,

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on behalf of my country, on your selection as the coordinator of this Conference. We wish you every success in your efforts to lead this Conference to the desired by all of us positive outcome .

My Government subscribes entirely to the statement delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom ,on behalf of the European Union and its Member-States. However, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity, to refer briefly to the great importance which Greece attaches to the CTBT Treaty

Mr Chairman,

Greece is among the first signatories of the CTBT treaty, having signed it in 1996 and then ratified it in 1999. Since then, we have been firmly committed to promoting the globalization of the treaty and its entry into force.

The proliferation challenges and the new threats the world faces today, have highlighted the necessity of strengthening the Non-Proliferation Regime. We believe that the CTBT is an important tool in the efforts to meet these threats and constitutes an essential part of the Nuclear Disarmament and the global non-proliferation regime .

We are deeply concerned of the fact that 9 years after the day that this treaty was opened for signature and although it has already been ratified by 122 states, its entry into force is unfortunately still pending.

In this spirit, 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.

Mr Chairman,

It is with deep satisfaction that we took note, of the progress achieved on establishing the verification regime, with the International Monitoring System close to completion .We expect from this system to provide reassurance that all states are complying with their obligations under the CTBT treaty.

We take this opportunity to commend the efforts undertaken by the first Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Mr. Wolfgang Hoffman, to achieve this progress. I would also like to welcome the appointment of Tibor Toth, as the new Executive Secretary of the organization. We are convinced of his ability and commitment to lead the Secretariat to the accomplishment of its objectives and we are extending to him, our full support.

Let me add to this point that Greece attaches great importance to the enhancement of the exploitation of the data and the scientific knowledge produced by the verification systems for civil purposes. More specifically we appreciate the value of these data for the effort to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters.

Mr Chairman,

I am convinced that this Conference will succeed in demonstrating the determination of all of us, who are committed to the CTBT to promote the entry into force of this Treaty and the building of an effective verification system.