Mr. Chairman,

Israel signed the CTBT in September 1996. This decision demonstrated its long standing policy to support the efforts of the international community to prevent proliferation, taking into consideration the specific characteristics of the Middle East and its security situation. Furthermore, Israel had played an active role throughout the negotiations of the Treaty in Geneva and contributed conceptually, technically and politically to its drafting.

Since the establishment of the PrepCom in November 1996, Israel has played a major part in the endeavor to develop the elements of the CTBT verification regime, including the practical procedures to be adopted in the operational manuals, by which the Treaty will be implemented.

Israel decided to vote in favour on resolution A/C.1/57/L.4/Rev.1 because of the importance it attaches to the objectives of the CTBT, notwithstanding its reservations regarding some of the wording in operative paragraph 1.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel remains committed to the objectives of the CTBT. We lament, however, that only moderate progress has been made to date on several important issues:

First, the development and readiness of the verification regime. In our view, its completion constitutes a prerequisite to entry into force, as required by the first paragraph of Article IV of the Treaty.

The verification regime should provide for a robust system that is, on one hand, as effective as possible to detect non-compliance with the basic obligations of the Treaty. At the same time, it should be immune to abuse and allow every State Signatory to protect its national security interests. These principles guide Israel in the development of the CTBT verification regime.

In addition, several salient political issues remain unresolved, in particular those related to the geographical region of the Middle East and South Asia (MESA). These problems are further compounded by the lack of acceptance of the CTBT by several states in the Middle East. In addition,
we regret the tolerance shown by other States Signatories towards attempts that have been made to block or bypass the functioning of the MESA group. Such attempts deviate from the letter and spirit of the Treaty, and if left unattended may cause serious complications in the future.

Lastly, we are concerned with regards to the negative dynamics evolving in our region, where certain States Signatories are not fully cooperative with the efforts to complete and test the IMS element of the verification regime, thus impeding the pace of development of this element of the verification regime.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman