Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann

Agenda Item 57 r: Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

21 October 2004
Mr. Chairman,

1. I am pleased to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The total ban of any nuclear explosion in any environment will help to end the development of ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons, as well as arresting the proliferation of these weapons. In a time when concerns about vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons are at the fore of the international peace and security debate.

2. Since its adoption the CTBT in 1996 the Treaty has been signed by a total of 173 States and ratified by 119 States, including 33 of the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty whose ratification is required for it to enter into force. I am pleased to note that since October 2003 four States have signed (Eritrea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania) and fourteen States have ratified (Bahrain, Belize, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania), including one of the Annex 2 States (the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

3. The increasing number of States committing themselves to a complete ban of nuclear explosions should not lead to complacency. 11 States whose ratification is necessary for entry into force of the Treaty, for various reasons have not yet done so. I am therefore particularly encouraged by the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, initiated by Australia, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands and adopted on 23 September 2004. It is another example demonstrating the support of States to bring about entry into force of the CTBT reinforcing the concrete measures to promote signature and ratification of the Treaty that were agreed by the 2003 Article XIV Conference and are being pursued in the Conference follow-up process.

4. The main activities of the Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat, which started work at the Vienna International Centre on 17 March 1997, have been the establishment of the verification regime stipulated by the CTBT and the promotion of understanding and entry into force of the Treaty.

5. The global verification regime, which needs to be operational at the Treaty’s entry into force, to monitor compliance with the comprehensive ban on all nuclear test explosions, consists of four elements:
   - The International Monitoring System (IMS), and respective means of communication supported by the International Data Centre (IDC), will be able to detect evidence of possible nuclear explosions;
   - A consultation and clarification process can clarify and resolve matters concerning possible non-compliance with the Treaty;
   - Each State Party will also have the right to request an on-site inspection in order to clarify whether a nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the Treaty, and to gather facts which might assist in identifying any possible violator;
Confidence-building measures will contribute to resolving compliance concerns arising from possible misinterpretation of verification data and thereby assisting in the calibration of IMS stations.

6. The establishment of the IMS, a worldwide network comprising 321 seismic, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories, is steadily progressing. Over 55% of the stations are now operational and we are confident that the network can be completed within the next three to four years. The current phase of testing and evaluation of the monitoring system shows promising results. Already now the system provides for global coverage. Attaining the strict standards for verification after entry into force of the Treaty will require further work.

7. The IMS stations are transmitting raw data to the IDC in Vienna through a satellite-based Global Communications Infrastructure, which also connects the IDC with National Data Centres (NDCs) of States. From the IDC both data and the resulting analysis bulletins are distributed to NDCs. To date, 82 States have established NDCs.

8. On-site inspection (OSI), as provided for in the Treaty, is a final verification measure, and the development of the draft OSI Operational Manual is a key task of the Preparatory Commission in this area.

9. The credibility of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements frequently hinges on the credibility of the verification system associated with them. International verification efforts were heavily and sometimes unfairly criticised for not living up to the high standards required for the job. In retrospect it was found, however, that these international verification efforts were not only working properly but also provided impartial and untainted information on the basis of which the international community could take its political decisions. Verification of international agreements is a difficult, slow and costly enterprise. I would like to thank all States who are supporting the build-up of our verification system technically, financially and politically and promise that we will do our utmost to live up to the high expectations in our monitoring capabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The primary purpose of the CTBT is to ensure globally an end to nuclear test explosions, thus enhancing national and international security. However, the CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional benefits derived from the IMS data and the activities of the IDC. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound data can be used in studies of the Earth’s structure and for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, tsunami warning, underwater explosion location, and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. Infrasound data can assist in minimizing the effect of volcanic eruptions on civil aviation and can be used for atmospheric and meteorological studies. The IMS radionuclide network offers opportunities for detecting radionuclide dispersion, monitoring radiation levels and studying natural radioactivity, biological research and environmental change investigations.
11. The Preparatory Commission continues to organize training programmes and workshops to support the enhancement of national capabilities of States Signatories in the implementation of the Treaty. These include training courses for IMS station operators, for NDC managers and technical staff, for data analysis, storage and management, on the Global Communications Infrastructure and on OSI technologies. In the field of international cooperation the Provisional Technical Secretariat continues its role as an information-clearing house and provides support for the advancement of the Commission’s work, including information visit programmes to support IMS and IDC activities. Voluntary contributions from Member States have been received to support these activities. In 2004, an international cooperation workshop for States from northern Africa took place in Tunis, Tunisia. From 29 November to 1 December an international cooperation workshop for States from southern Africa will be held in Pretoria, South Africa. Such workshops help identify a range of measures to enhance support for and further participation in the work of the Commission, as well as to advance national implementation of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Following the adoption on 15 June 2000 by the General Assembly of the Agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO our relations and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies have intensified. Cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, including the three Regional Centres is of particular importance to the Commission and I would like to use this opportunity to thank the DDA for its dedicated work. A service agreement, which the Commission concluded with the UNDP provides us with operational support. The WMO is receiving data from the monitoring system for research purposes. Potential fields for cooperation are being explored with other organizations of the UN system.

13. The CTBT was assigned a special role in the disarmament related chapter of the Millennium Declaration and the Commission is supporting States within its limited possibilities in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Millennium Declaration. The five year review scheduled for fall 2005 will provide opportunity to discuss further action in this respect. Depending on the wishes of the ratifying states of the CTBT the next Article XIV conference could coincide with the deliberations of the UN-General Assembly on the Millennium declaration and both processes could benefit from such proximity.

14. In order to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family including the implementation of the Millennium Declaration the Preparatory Commission requested full membership in the United Nations system’s Chief Executive Board (CEB). This would not only allow for strengthened cooperation and synergies, it would also provide essential expertise in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to this body.
15. In closing, I would like to underline that eight years of developments since its opening for signature have confirmed the growing support and recognition by the international community of the CTBT as an important instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. By signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, States confirm their commitment to these shared goals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.