"Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty"

Explanation of vote by Mr. Alon Bar, Director, Arms Control Department, MFA Jerusalem

(61st Session of the General Assembly, New York, 26 October 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

Israel's signature on the CTBT in September 1996 reflects its long standing policy to bring itself closer, wherever possible, to international norms on nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation.

The importance of the CTBT is especially pronounced in light of the nuclear proliferation challenges and non-compliance so evident in recent years in the Middle East. The recent nuclear explosion reportedly conducted by the DPRK worsens the situation further and add to the already existing instability in Northeast Asia.

Since the establishment of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT in November 1996, Israel has played a major part in various activities to develop all elements of the CTBT verification regime. This demonstrates the importance Israel attaches to the CTBT, which it views as an important contribution to enhancing international peace and security.

Israel voted in favor of resolution L. 48 in light of the importance it attaches to the objectives of the CTBT, notwithstanding its reservations regarding paragraphs...

Mr. Chairman,

Israel believes that progress has still to be made in the development of the CTBT verification regime, whose completion is a prerequisite to Entry Into Force of the Treaty as required by the first paragraph of Article IV of the CTBT.

The Treaty's verification regime should be robust to detect non compliance with its basic obligations, be immune to abuse and at the same time allow each state signatory to protect its national security interests. For Israel, completing the verification regime constitutes a major consideration for ratifying the Treaty.
Two other important considerations for ratification include Israel's sovereign equality status in the Policy Making Organs of the Treaty, including those related to the geographical region of the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) and in the executive council of the future CTBTO, and the adherence to and compliance with the Treaty by states in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

Pending EIF we believe that the advancement of the CTBT calls for the following commitments and activities to be diligently pursued by all states:

• Sustain the commitment not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion in line with the Treaty’s basic obligations.

• Complete ASAP the CTBT’s verification regime.

• Operate, maintain and test the IMS and IDC, prior to EIF, in order to gain experience and to provide early detection capabilities. In addition, where coverage gaps of IMS stations exist, take temporary measures to fill those gaps, such as operation of auxiliary seismic stations as primary ones until all primary stations are effectively functioning and transferring data.

• Maintain the technical and a-political nature of the Preparatory Commission’s work and respect its Rules and Procedures.

• Use the IMS and IDC capabilities without detracting from their primary objectives as the verification instruments of the Treaty, to support Tsunami warning systems in order to alert threatened populations in a timely manner and save human lives.

Thank you Mr. Chairman