

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

STATEMENT TO THE FOURTH CONFERENCE
ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF
THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY
New York, 21 September 2005

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to this fourth conference on facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which I am pleased to declare open.

We meet at a time of heightened global anxiety about weapons of mass destruction – particularly nuclear weapons. It is our collective duty to promote and strengthen the various multilateral instruments which reduce the threat these weapons pose to us all.

Yet we are not, as yet, rising to this challenge, as we saw at last week's World Summit. For the second time in four months, States could not agree on the way forward on disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This was a significant failure, and I believe all States should support the Norwegian-led efforts to find a way forward.

We must also make progress in our efforts to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force as soon as possible. The treaty is an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and its early entry into force would be an important contribution to international peace and security.

The treaty was opened for signature nine years ago. The vast majority of the States – 176 in all – have signed it. One hundred and twenty-five States have ratified it, including 33 of the 44 whose ratification is essential for the treaty to enter into force. And there has been important technical progress to give shape to the future treaty organization, and to establish an effective verification mechanism.

But after nine years, the treaty is still not in force. We should all be gravely concerned about that. The longer entry into force of the treaty is delayed, the greater the risk that someone, somewhere, will test nuclear weapons. That would be a major setback for the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament.

While this conference will naturally review a range of important technical issues, your most urgent task is to reaffirm your unwavering commitment to the treaty, and your resolve to work for its early entry into force.

For my part, I call on all States that have not signed or ratified the treaty to do so without delay – particularly those States who must ratify the treaty in order to bring it into force. Pending its entry into force, I urge all States to maintain a moratorium on nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, and to refrain from acts that would defeat the object or purpose of the treaty.

Let's not lose heart. Progress on difficult nuclear issues is possible. We saw that earlier this week, with the agreement reached in the six-party talks regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula, which now must be implemented.

So let us continue to work with determination for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I hope that this conference sends a clear message to all States that the treaty cannot enter into force too soon, and that achieving that goal would be an important step towards a safer world.

Thank you very much.