Input by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

_Ahead of the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), what are the prospects for components of the regime such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)? How important is the CTBT to the wider rules-based international order?_

**- The CTBT, Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament**

Stemming the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and ultimately preventing the possibility of nuclear war, remain priorities of the highest order for the international community. Against the challenge of establishing the legal and technical foundations needed for verifiable, transparent and irreversible nuclear disarmament, a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear testing is recognized as an integral element of a multilaterally-established nuclear disarmament framework. The NPT acknowledges this in its preamble.

By prohibiting nuclear test explosions, the CTBT constrains the development of nuclear weapons and inhibits the acquisition of a nuclear weapon capability. When an in-force CTBT is coupled with a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for military purposes, a firm barrier is established preventing the qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons by both nuclear weapons capable States and would-be possessors.

Since its opening for signature in 1996, the CTBT has served as the bedrock of the international norm against nuclear testing. The Treaty enjoys near-universal support, with 184 States Signatories and 168 ratifying States. It is among the most adhered-to multilateral arms control arrangements in history.

The CTBT is a model for non-proliferation and disarmament verification. With its democratic, transparent verification system and equal obligations for all States, the CTBT has set a high standard for multilateralism in arms control.

States Signatories of the CTBT have invested considerable sums, through the CTBTO, in building up the Treaty’s monitoring infrastructure, which is largely in place and active, even prior to entry into force. The CTBTO has successfully provided accurate and timely data to States Signatories from its International Monitoring System following each announced nuclear test conducted this century. It has also developed the capability, unique among intergovernmental organizations, to observe and validate test-site closure activities and verify nuclear test moratoria, if called on to do so by States Signatories.

Nonetheless, entry into force remains elusive. All 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT must ratify the Treaty before this can occur. While 36 of these States have already done so, there still remain 8 States from which ratifications are outstanding: the United States, China, Egypt, Israel, Iran (all of which are States Signatories); and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, and Pakistan (which have not signed the Treaty).

All States Signatories have a strong role to play in CTBT verification. Furthermore, its operation builds trust and confidence, enhancing security and stability in the world.
However, the benefit of this existing global public good can easily be lost in the absence of entry into force of the Treaty. Only entry into force can provide the credible assurance of a nuclear test-free world.

- The CTBT and the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Those who created the NPT in the 1960s showed foresight and resolve. Foresight that the nuclear age required a set of diplomatic and normative tools to prevent the destruction of humanity and the environment, and resolve to strike a long-lasting ‘grand bargain’ to deliver peace and security.

If the NPT is under strain it is not because of a flaw in the instrument itself. It is because not enough has been done to maintain and secure its entire chain of responsibilities, of which the entry into force of the CTBT is an essential part.

The CTBT was an integral part of the decision made in 1995 to extend the NPT. It provides the international community with a non-discriminatory, verifiable, and legally-binding means to ensure that no nuclear test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, can take place.

The current NPT review cycle needs positive momentum to bridge existing and growing differences between the Parties. Since the announced end to testing by the DPRK, there is currently a de facto global moratorium on nuclear testing that can be built on. Progress on CTBT entry into force can and should be a point of convergence for all NPT States Parties.

This can be achieved by, inter alia:

- Ensuring a high level of visibility for the CTBT and the CTBTO at the Review Conference (RevCon) and the last Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in 2019, including in Chair’s statements and final reports;
- Having CTBT States Signatories make clear and unambiguous references to the importance of entry into force during statements to PrepCom and RevCon;
- Including measurable and accountable progress on CTBT entry into force in any agreed Plan of Action issuing from the RevCon.

- The United Kingdom and the CTBT in the NPT Review context

The United Kingdom has always been among the leading supporters of the CTBT and the CTBTO: financially, politically and technically. It is a valuable interlocutor with countries yet to ratify the Treaty, particularly so with several of the remaining ‘Annex 2’ States. CTBT entry into force would deliver a long-standing policy objective, and, through reinforcing the NPT, would strengthen the UK’s approach to nuclear non-proliferation.

In addition to the measures outlined in the previous section, the UK could further enhance the standing of the CTBT as an integral part of the rules-based international order by, inter alia:

- Making use of all available opportunities and methods to advocate for CTBT ratification, especially with ‘Annex 2’ States;
- Working with like-minded countries to this end in a coordinated and targeted manner;
- Including the CTBT and CTBTO on the international agenda in bodies such