



IRELAND

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Richard Ryan
Permanent Representative of Ireland
to the United Nations

at the

Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
New York, 21-23 September 2005

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement which has been made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Conference, and I pledge Ireland's full support and cooperation.

I pay tribute to the leadership that Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann has provided during his term as first Executive Secretary of the CTBTO. Much progress has been made during his stewardship. We welcome the appointment of his successor Ambassador Tibor Toth and are confident that his considerable diplomatic skills will guide us effectively in the months and years ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

This conference affords us an important opportunity to demonstrate the overwhelming support that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) enjoys. We can also send a strong political signal confirming the relevance and vitality of this key international instrument. We do so, not only by our presence here in New York, but also by the Final Declaration which we will adopt by consensus at the end of this meeting.

Ireland continues to see the CTBT as a fundamental step in strengthening the current international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. By aiming to prevent testing and contributing to the halting of the development of nuclear weapons, the Treaty serves both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

We regret that in 2005, nearly a decade after the Treaty was adopted by the United Nations and opened for signature, it has still not entered into force. Since the last meeting of this conference in Vienna two years ago, nonetheless, there has been welcome progress. Some 125 countries have now ratified, including 33 of the 44 countries on whose ratification entry into force of the Treaty is dependent. Ireland urges the remaining eleven to review their positions and to take the necessary steps towards early ratification.

Pending entry into force of the Treaty, all States should continue to abide by a moratorium on testing, support the establishment of an effective verification system, and refrain from any action contrary to the Treaty. The continuing observance of the moratorium on tests is welcome but it can never be a substitute for the legally binding prohibition enshrined in the Treaty.

The significance of the CTBT is greatly enhanced by its link to other crucial instruments in the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, particularly the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

The preamble of the NPT refers to the determination to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference the negotiation of the CTBT was included in an agreed programme of action. In the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference in 2000, the CTBT again featured prominently, in the practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the NPT. Ireland continues to regard these as the benchmarks for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

We were deeply disappointed by the outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the NPT in May. It failed to produce a single conclusion or recommendation of substance. This was a major missed opportunity for the international community.

More recently, just last week, the international community again failed to rise to the occasion on nuclear issues. The agreement reached by our Heads of State and Government at their summit has many important and positive elements. However, it is deeply disappointing, as my Prime Minister and Foreign Minister both made clear in their addresses to the General Assembly, that it contains nothing on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or on the need to strengthen the NPT.

These setbacks are very disappointing. But we cannot be discouraged or despairing. The challenges we face will not vanish by simply being ignored.

All countries, but most especially small countries, like Ireland, have a fundamental stake in a rules-based international order and in strong international institutions. We continue to believe that a multilateral regime of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements, and the universalisation of the norms which they contain, offers the best guarantee of international peace and security. The CTBT has a central place in this architecture and we hope that this conference will help us to develop added momentum toward its early entry into force.