



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

245 East 49th Street • New York, NY 10017

Statement

by

Hon. Alhaji Momodu Koroma

Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

to the

Conference of Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

New York, 22' September 2005

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Statement by
The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Honourable Mr. Momodu Koroma
to the Conference of Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

New York, 22 September 2005

Mr. President,

My delegation joins others in congratulating you on your election to direct the affairs of this conference. We would also like to commend Ambassador Ramaker and the Executive Secretary of the Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission and his staff, for the good work that have done to ensure the success of the conference.

The Sierra Leone delegation associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by my colleague the distinguished Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Syed Hamid Albar, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone considers the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as one of the pillars of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is as relevant as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Every convention, every treaty, every national or multilateral measure on or relating to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a solemn commitment by States to prevent the total annihilation of humanity.

This conference is taking place at a crucial period in the history of the United Nations, at a time when we are engaged in efforts to reform the Organization, including the creation of new mechanisms and the transformation of others, in response to changes, challenges and threats in the international system. Yet, over the past few months it appeared that there is some unnecessary reluctance on our part to respond effectively to the challenges and threats of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. This unfortunately is the conclusion one can draw from two recent events – the disappointing results of the NPT Review Conference, and the disappearance of the disarmament and non-proliferation elements in the Outcome Document of last week's Summit at the UN General Assembly.

So, Mr. President, this Conference offers us an appropriate opportunity to redirect the attention of all States Members of the United Nations, to the necessity of dealing effectively with all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests.

Mr. President,

In discussions about facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT reference is often made to the need to maintain a moratorium on nuclear test explosion pending the entry into force of the Treaty. As Sierra Leone stated in its national contribution to the disarmament cluster of the draft Outcome Document for the Summit, a moratorium is always an important step towards disarmament. We welcome the moratorium on nuclear test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. However, a moratorium is voluntary initiative. It is not a permanent substitute for a legally-binding instrument on such an issue of vital importance for international peace and security. Indeed, this is why Sierra Leone and other members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), are now transforming the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons into a legally-binding instrument.

Sierra Leone would therefore like to urge all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. In this connection my delegation recalls recent General Assembly resolutions which stress the importance and urgency of signature and ratification, without delay and without conditions, to achieve the earliest entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty.

Sierra Leone continues to attach importance to the principle of universality in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We still believe that while compliance with existing legally-binding instruments is absolutely essential, and while drawing attention to the consequences of non-compliance by States with their treaty commitments, universality of disarmament and non-proliferation regimes is equally essential. Universality is in the interest of international peace and security.

We therefore urge those states that are still outside the CTBT to translate multilateralism into action and ensure that the Treaty comes into force without any further delay. Universal ratification of this instrument is well overdue. I think it was Foreign Minister Petersen of Norway who mentioned yesterday that the longer moratoria last, the higher the threshold for conducting nuclear tests.

Mr. President.

Let this conference be a reaffirmation of our commitment, indeed our collective responsibility to respond more positively to the nuclear threat; our collective responsibility to protect the peoples of the world from nuclear destruction.

Let us hope that by this time next year we would not only be celebrating the tenth anniversary of its opening for signature, we would also be celebrating the entry into force of this important multilateral instrument for enhancing international peace and security.

Thank you Mr. President.