NGO Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for the Third Article XIV Conference on Accelerating Entry-Into-Force

To be delivered 5 September 2003

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, and Colleagues,

1. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an integral part of our global efforts to achieve international security for all, free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction. All states should recognise that action on the CTBT is all the more important in light of the rising hostilities across the globe. From ongoing casualties in Iraq, the unstable tension on the Korean peninsula, and the precariousness of the NPT, the dire necessity of a comprehensive test ban is evident. Implementation of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty will take the world one important step closer to the kind of global security framework it desperately needs. States presently resisting the CTBT are undermining their own security as well as the security of the world.

2. The CTBT was brought about largely through the hard work and determination of NGOs and millions of ordinary people around the world. In all of these years, the NGO community has never faltered in its advocacy for a test-ban treaty. People throughout the world understood that ending nuclear testing was essential for three powerful reasons: to halt the spiralling arms race; to obstruct the emergence of new nuclear powers; and to prevent further devastation of human health and the global environment, already contaminated from the more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted in the 20th century. It is estimated that atmospheric testing directly produced 430,000 fatal human cancers by the year 2000. Eventually, that total will be 2.4 million. If the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons leads to new rounds of testing, as we believe that it will, deleterious impacts on public health and social well-being can only increase.

2a. The health burdens of nuclear testing, uranium mining, and other impacts of nuclear weapons development have fallen most heavily on colonised, indigenous, or minority groups: aboriginal people in Australia, Micronesian and Polynesian Pacific Islanders, Uygur people in China, Western Shoshone people in Nevada, the Kazakh people in the former Soviet Union, and, most recently, tribal villagers in Pokhran, India and Chaghi, Pakistan.

3. We are profoundly disappointed with the countries that failed to attend the second Conference on the EIF of the CTBT in November of 2001, especially those states whose signature or ratification is essential for entry-into-force. We welcome, however, at the support for the CTBT demonstrated by three of the Nuclear Weapon States- France, Russia, and the UK- and we call on them to maintain and strengthen their support. We also welcome the statement issued in September of 2002, by the 18 Foreign Ministers in support of the Treaty, the June 19th declaration by the Organisation of American States – despite the objection of the United States – in support of the Treaty, as well as the statement from Prime Minister Koizumi on Nagasaki Day, calling for the Treaty to enter-into-force.
4. It is crucial to the stability and future of the non-proliferation regime in its entirety that the CTBT enter-into-force, as was unanimously confirmed at the 2000 Review Conference. Among the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament identified in the Final Document of that Conference, the very first two are devoted to the CTBT and nuclear testing. These steps stress the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions to achieve the early entry-into-force of the CTBT. Furthermore, the document calls for maintaining the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions pending the EIF of the Treaty. The urgency of the Treaty entering-into-force has not waned in the three short years since that unanimous document; indeed, these goals are in serious danger of being undermined today.

5. A ban on testing is an essential step towards nuclear disarmament because it helps to block dangerous nuclear competition and new nuclear threats from emerging. However, it must be recognised that technological advances in nuclear weapons research and development mean that a ban on nuclear test explosions by itself cannot prevent qualitative improvements of nuclear arsenals. Efforts to improve nuclear arsenals and to make nuclear weapons more useable in warfare will jeopardise the test-ban and non-proliferation regimes. We call on all states possessing nuclear weapons to halt all qualitative improvements in their nuclear armaments, whether or not these improvements require test explosions.

6. In this context, we are alarmed by recent disclosures of proposals by the present US administration for the research and development of a new generation of earth-penetrating nuclear warheads and new types of "low-yield" warheads, as well as proposals to reduce the time necessary to resume underground nuclear testing. Research, development, production, or testing of such weapons by the United States or any state could lead to a dangerous nuclear reaction cycle that would not only undermine the test ban, but international security as a whole.

6.a. Although US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on August 7, 2003, that the US “has no intention of testing nuclear weapons” at this time, Powell also noted that “we can’t rule it out forever.” This pledge is hardly reassuring given the view of other senior officials in the Bush administration that nuclear testing might be needed to develop and produce new types of nuclear weapons or to maintain the reliability of the US stockpile. Such research could lead to development and proposals to resume nuclear testing within the next two to three years.

6.b. These disclosures underscore the link between nuclear testing and continued US reliance on nuclear weapons for security. They also reveal an appalling disregard of the NPT commitment to ban nuclear testing permanently.

7. We recognise that any new step in the field of security generally often involves some risk, but the CTBT has been carefully designed so that its benefits greatly outweigh any possible risks. The CTBT establishes a far-reaching global monitoring, verification, and compliance system. A series of independent studies, most recently by the US National Academy of Sciences in 2002, have all concluded that the system is capable of detecting nuclear explosions in all environments with a high degree of confidence, thereby deterring potential treaty violators. We commend the PrepCom and Provisional Technical Secretariat for their work in establishing the International Monitoring System and International Data Centre, which are already proving their capabilities beyond expectations. We support efforts to promote the civil and scientific applications of the
CTBT verification technology as a means of recouping costs and expanding the range of CTBT stakeholders.

8. We oppose attempts by some states to delay full construction of the CTBT's verification system. Such behaviour signals a lack of political commitment, harms efforts to increase the number of parties to the Treaty and prevents the system from demonstrating its full technical capabilities, thereby giving comfort to those who question the Treaty's verifiability. We deplore efforts by a small number of states to obstruct finalisation of the on-site inspection (OSI) arrangements for the Treaty by not paying their dues, not participating in discussions on the OSI manual, or by adopting unreasonable positions in those negotiations. Six years after discussions on the manual first began, we should expect it to be ready. We call on all signatories to provide the political, financial and technical support necessary for the earliest feasible implementation of all elements of the CTBT's verification system.

9. We believe that global security would be enhanced if all states with nuclear test sites engaged in confidence-building processes, including transparency measures at those sites, during the interim period prior to their complete elimination. In this regard, we note with interest the Russian proposal for mutual confidence-building measures with the United States following the CTBT's entry-into-force. We applaud Ambassador Hoffman's visit to the Novaya Zemlya test site earlier this year and encourage the United States and Russia, as well as India, Pakistan, and China to pursue initiatives to increase transparency at their test sites to dispel concerns about ongoing activities at those sites, including subcritical tests.

10. Despite overwhelming international support for the CTBT, 12 key states have not yet signed and/or ratified, unnecessarily delaying entry-into-force. We are particularly displeased with the policies of the Bush administration, which is not even seeking Senate approval for ratification. Although the US remains a signatory, it was the only country to oppose the retention of the CTBT on the UN agenda in November 2001. The US has declared its intent not to contribute financially or to participate in non-IMS activities of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, including preparations for on-site inspections. In addition, through employing a narrow reading of the rules, the United States prevented the CTBTO Provisional Secretariat from making a statement at the 2003 PrepCom of the NPT as they had the year before.

11. But most importantly, this conference must train its attention and its future efforts on achieving the signatures and ratification of those states that are required by the stipulations of Article XIV, in order for the Treaty to enter-into-force. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, and Pakistan must sign and ratify the CTBT. China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, the United States, and Viet Nam must now ratify, without further procrastination. The longer these states wait to join the Treaty, the greater the chance that some nation may begin testing and set off a dangerous international action-reaction cycle of military and nuclear confrontation.

11.a. Since the last Article XIV Conference, only Algeria has set an honourable example by moving from the signatories’ to the ratifiers’ list. What are the prospects for the next two years? Let us take a closer look at the problems relating to the Treaty’s entry-into-force as stipulated in Article XIV and its associated Annex II.
11.b. Of the twelve states whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to enter-into-force, four have thus far failed to fully act upon their expressed intentions. Their laggard performance in fully acting on that commitment is affecting the commitment of other states. Each state must navigate competing priorities and complex legislative processes, but that can no longer remain an excuse for delayed ratification. We strongly urge Colombia, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make a concerted effort to complete ratification before the end of this year. The world cannot tolerate any more procrastination.

11.c. We are disappointed that progress in China has ground to a halt. There does not appear to be any domestic political obstacle in the way of completing the ratification process, and we therefore strongly urge China to also complete ratification before the end of the year.

11.d. Three Annex II countries in the Middle East have attached conditions to their ratification of the Treaty. This is profoundly self-defeating. All the states in the region are in favour of the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as expressed in a long line of UNGA resolutions. The full adherence of each of these states to the Treaty could only help to advance that common objective. We call on Israel, Egypt, and Iran to cease the counterproductive finger pointing and abandon the conditions they have attached to ratification. We find it significant that all of the Annex II states in the region are signatories, and we strongly urge other countries in the region that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so immediately.

11.e. We welcome Pakistan's participation in this conference as an observer; we are disappointed that India chose to stay away. Given the series of crises with grave nuclear overtones that have shaken the sub-continent since the 1998 nuclear explosions, it should be self-evident that another round of tit-for-tat testing would adversely affect regional and international security. More so than any other region in the world, South Asia needs a nuclear-test-ban. We urge these two nations to embrace the CTBT as symbolic of their mutual desire to move back from the brink and to cultivate peaceful relations.

11.f. It is perhaps ironic that this tour d'horizon leaves us with two such dissimilar nations: the Democratic Republic of Korea and the United States of America. Unfortunately, they hold in common a desire to retain the option of conducting nuclear tests. Neither one of them has provided the world with assurances that it will not exercise that option in the next two years – before the next Article XIV Conference. We hope that in context of the six-nation talks now underway, the issue of adherence to the CTBT will feature alongside the issue of adherence to the NPT. It would be an excellent confidence-building measure for North Korea to sign the CTBT and for both countries to proceed toward ratification.

12. It is the fundamental responsibility of the CTBT States Parties to urge the prompt signature and ratification of the remaining 12 Annex II countries, who must do so without delay and without conditions or reservations. States Parties must also endorse the continuation of the current global nuclear test explosion moratorium until such time as the CTBT enters-into-force. On these points, there is no room for compromise.
13. NGOs are ready to make greater contributions to the efforts for entry-into-force. In particular, they will be able to do so if the interaction between governments, parliaments, NGOs and the media is intensified. Governments, for instance, should report to their parliaments on activities to implement the decisions of earlier Article XIV Conferences and their plans for future activities. The matter of entry-into-force should be discussed at regional intergovernmental meetings and parliamentary bodies linked to such organisations. The Provisional Technical Secretariat should be asked to assist the President in compiling the reports from States Parties on their individual and collective initiatives, and to make them available to all Parties on a regular, perhaps bi-monthly basis. NGOs, in the meanwhile, will increase our own efforts at monitoring and reporting these initiatives, and disseminating this information to the public and to the media. We will also continue our advocacy efforts aimed at the CTBT hold-out states. Through a strengthened network of NGOs, governments, international bodies and the media, we can promote further initiatives, intensify public discussion, promote solidarity, and exert broad pressure on the hold-out states in question.

14. Entry-into-force of the CTBT is truly within reach. But as a result of the actions of a handful of states, the viability of a verifiable, comprehensive ban on nuclear tests – and the future of the NPT itself – is in jeopardy. No single government should be allowed to stand in the way of the historical opportunity to permanently end the scourge of nuclear testing, an indispensable step towards eliminating nuclear weapon threats and preventing nuclear war.

15. This presentation was prepared and supported by NGOs who have worked for a comprehensive test-ban treaty for many years, in many countries, and in many ways. On behalf of the world’s citizens, we urge you to do all that is within your power to ensure the entry-into-force of the CTBT and the full implementation of all elements of this historical Treaty.

Thank you.

NGO Signatories to the Statement

AAPSO (Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation)
The Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy
Action for UN Renewal, United Kingdom
Albanian Ecological Club - International Friends of Nature
Amandamaj ry, Finland
Amici della Terra (Friends of the Earth, Italy)
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Gerecht Wirtschaften, Austria
Arms Control Association, USA
The Arms Reduction Coalition (CORE), United Kingdom
Artists for Peace, Sweden
Association Médicale pour la Prévention de la Guerre Nucléaire, Belgium (section of IPPNW)
Association of Physicians and Medical Workers for Social Responsibility, Kenya
Associazone Italiana Medicina per la Prevenzione della Guerra Nucleare
The Atomic Mirror, British Office
Australian Education Union
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), United Kingdom
Center for Antiwar Action, Belgrade, Serbia
Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence, Bad Ischl, Austria
Center for Russian Environmental Policy, Moscow
Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment (CORE), United Kingdom
Disarmament and Security Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand
Dutch Medical Association for Peace Research (NVMP) (affiliate of IPPNW)
East Midlands CND Region, United Kingdom
"Ecotopia" magazine, Greece
European Union of Women
For Mother Earth International
Friedens- und Begegnungsstätte, Mutlangen, Germany
German Peace Society - United War Resisters
Global Mothers - Women in Action for Environment and Peace
Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space
Global Resource Action Centre for the Environment (GRACE), USA
Greenpeace International
Grandmothers for Peace, Finland
Institute for Law and Peace (INLAP), London
International Club for Peace Research
International Federation of Social Workers
International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)
International Human Rights Observer (IHRO)
International Institute for Peace, Vienna, Austria
International Peace Bureau
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Dem.Republic Congo
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Germany
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Poland
International Progress Organisation
Japan Congress against A-and H-Bombs
Latin American Circle for International Studies (LACIS), Mexiko City
Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy, USA
Liaison Committee for Peace and Security, Denmark
Littleborough Peace Group, Lancashire, England
Malaysian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Mama Terra / For Mother Earth, Romania
Medical Association for Prevention of War, Australia
MEDACT (Medical Action for Global Security), United Kingdom (affiliate of IPPNW)
Merseyside Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Liverpool, United Kingdom
National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ)
New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women
NGO Committee on Disarmament, Geneva
Norske Leger mot Atomwapen, Norway (affiliate of IPPNW)
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Organizacion de Medicos contra violencia, Costa Rica (affiliate of IPPNW)
Oesterreichische Mediziner gegen Gewalt und Atomgefahren (OMEGA) (Austrian affiliate of IPPNW)
Pacific Campaign for Disarmament and Security (PCDS)
Pax Christi International
Pax Christi USA
Peace Council Aotearo New Zealand
Peace Depot Japan
The Peace Foundation Aotearo / New Zealand
Peace Moves Coalition, Penzance, United Kingdom
Peacequest International
People with Disabilities Uganda
Physicians for Global Survival, Canada (affiliate of IPPNW)
Physicians for Social Responsibility, USA
Physicians for Social Responsibility (IPPNW), Switzerland
Project on European Nuclear Non-Proliferation
Project Plowshare Calgary, Canada
Reseau "Sortir du nucléaire", France
SERO, The Swedish Renewable Energy Association
Servas International
Soka Gakkai International
Stop-Essais / Abolitions des Armes Nucleaire, France
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
Swedish Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Trade Union Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Ireland
Universal Esperanto Association
Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), London
Wallasey CND, Wirral, United Kingdom
West Midlands Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, United Kingdom
Western States Legal Foundation, USA
Woking CND, Surrey, United Kingdom
Women against Nuclear Power, Finland
Women and Children Development Organisation, Lahore, Pakistan
Women for Peace, Finland
Women's Federation for World Peace, Austrian Section
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Aotearo / New Zealand Section
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Australia
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Bolivia
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Costa Rica
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Netherlands
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), France
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Germany
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), India
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Italy
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Norway
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Russia
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), United States
World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations