The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) bans nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions. Unlike the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, which banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere, underwater and in space, the CTBT bans nuclear weapon test explosions anywhere. Negotiated but not agreed by the Conference on Disarmament, the treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 50/245 on 10 September 1996 and opened for signature on 24 September 1996. The 2010 NPT Review Conference, in its Final Document, recognizes that “the cessation of all nuclear test explosions and all other nuclear explosions, by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, constitutes an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.”

Over 2000 nuclear explosions were recorded between July 1945 when the first nuclear bomb was tested by the United States and 1996 when the CTBT banning such explosions was opened for signature. These nuclear tests were undertaken by the United States (1000+), the Soviet Union (700+), France (200+), the United Kingdom and China (45 each). Since the CTBT was opened for signature, three countries have tested nuclear weapons explosive devices: India and Pakistan in 1998, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2017.

While the CTBT has been nearly universally accepted, it has yet to enter into force. So far, 184 countries have signed the Treaty, of which 168 have also ratified it, including three nuclear-weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. Before the CTBT can enter into force, however, 44 countries listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, must sign and ratify it. Of these, eight have yet to do so: DPRK, India and Pakistan, which have not yet signed the Treaty, while China, Egypt, Iran, Israel and the United States have not ratified it. The CTBT will enter into force when all States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty have signed and ratified it. The last Annex 2 State to ratify the Treaty was Indonesia on 6 February 2012.

In order to facilitate the promotion of the entry into force of the Treaty, the Secretary-General, upon the request of a majority of ratifying states, convenes biennially the conferences on facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty (i.e. the “Article XIV” conferences). Eleven such conferences have been held every alternate year since 1999 in Vienna and New York, respectively. In addition, the ministerial meeting of the
Friends of the CTBT is held in the years when an Article XIV conference does not take place. Nine such conferences have been held since 2002. 

**CTBT Verification Regime**

The Vienna-based Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO PrepCom) maintains the International Monitoring System (IMS). The IMS is a worldwide network of seismic, hydro acoustic, infrasound and radionuclide stations used to remotely detect nuclear explosions and to thereby verify compliance with the CTBT. The network is nearly complete with 298 stations certified, 9 installed, 5 under construction and 25 planned, making the verification system over 92 percent complete. When fully established, the IMS will consist of 337 monitoring facilities in 89 countries and will be complemented by an on-site inspection regime applicable once the Treaty has entered into force.

**The role of the United Nations**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the depositary of the CTBT and the convener of the “Article XIV” conferences. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs together with the Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO serves as the secretariat for these conferences and maintains “a close working relationship on matters of mutual interest and concern” in accordance with the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the CTBTO PrepCom (General Assembly resolution 54/280).

**Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament**

The Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future*, highlights the need to preserve and institutionalise the norm against nuclear testing and stresses the importance of an in force CTBT as a means for safeguarding and ensuring its permanence. The Secretary-General appealed to all remaining States whose ratifications are required for the CTBT to enter into force to commit to sign the Treaty at an early date if they have not already done so, and to accelerate the completion of their ratification processes.

**CTBT Resolutions**

To mark the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT, on 23 September 2016, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2310 (2016). “Stressing the vital importance and urgency of achieving the early entry into force of the Treaty,” the resolution urges all States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so immediately and uphold their moratoriums on nuclear testing. The CTBT resolution that is presented annually to the United Nations General Assembly also stresses the vital importance and urgency of signature and ratification, without delay and without conditions, in order to achieve the earliest entry into force of the CTBT.

**International Day against Nuclear Tests**

On 2 December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests by unanimously adopting resolution 64/35. The resolution calls for increasing awareness and education “about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.” Each year, since then, the day has been observed by coordinating various activities throughout the world, such as symposia, conferences and exhibits.

**Resources for Further Reading**

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization webpage at: [https://www.ctbto.org/](https://www.ctbto.org/)

Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda at: [https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf)