

My country has for many years been dedicated to the task of achieving a CTB. We have conducted an extensive national research programme to facilitate the verification of such a treaty. We are convinced that the work of the Ad Hoc Group is an important contribution to our efforts in this respect. We are further convinced of the value of continued work to gain more experience through this experiment and to prepare operational manuals. In our view no efforts should be spared in paving the way for a CTB, including continued efforts in the technical field. The report just presented by the Ad Hoc Group shows clearly that most valuable work has already been accomplished towards satisfying reasonable verification requirements. It is now time for the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement immediately on a mandate which would make this possible.

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Some eight years have elapsed since the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts was established by the then Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and subsequently maintained by the Committee on Disarmament. It is regrettable that the prospects on this issue which the international community faced towards the end of the 1970s have substantially altered -- if they have not actually disappeared -- owing to the lack of political will of some nuclear-weapon States to initiate negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests. At the recent plenary meeting of 3 April this lack of will once again emerged clearly.

Obviously, this continuing situation has repercussions on the task of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts. It is our opinion that the Ad Hoc Group and its planned exercises cannot continue to take place in a vacuum. Any activity performed must be directly related to the negotiating process which is taking place under item 1 of our agenda. Otherwise, it will detract from the mission of the Ad Hoc Group, which would then become a permanent body the purpose of which would be to consider and experiment with scientific and technical developments in the field of seismology. It is obvious that this cannot be the function of the Ad Hoc Group, nor was this the purpose for which it was established.

The objective which led the negotiating body to establish the Ad Hoc Group was to receive technical information and suggestions on a system suitable for verifying compliance with a nuclear-test-ban treaty. The considerable experience which we have accumulated shows us that the search for a perfect solution is preventing us from achieving an adequate one. It would also seem that, in the expectation of negotiations, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts will continue with a series of experiments which, despite their scientific and technical value, will be of little importance if they are not accompanied by the relevant political negotiations.

As the Secretary-General said to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on 29 February 1972, "The technical and scientific aspects of the problem have been so fully explored that only a political decision is now necessary in order to achieve final agreement". That opinion, which has been recalled countless times, was to be officially reiterated subsequently in 1979.

It is also our conviction that, as paragraph 31 of the Final Document states, "Disarmament and arms limitation agreements should provide for adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and ensure that they are being observed by all parties. The form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement depend upon and should be determined by the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement".