

# *Canada and the banning of nuclear weapons testing*

## **Nuclear Disarmament**

The Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in May 1998 once again brought home to Canadians the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Public reaction against the nuclear tests demonstrated wide support among Canadians for banning all nuclear tests.

Canadians have a proud history of leadership in the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament arena. Immediately after the Second World War, we were among the first nations to pursue a nuclear non-proliferation treaty to establish an essential framework for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts, and for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995. It has 186 State Parties. Canada's continued activism in the disarmament arena is evident in the selection of Ambassador Mark Moher as Chairman of the Ad-Hoc Committee to begin negotiations for a Convention to Halt the Production of Fissile Material for Explosive Purposes.

## **CTBT Implementation Legislation**

Canada is enacting domestic legislation to implement the CTBT. The legislation:

- makes it a crime to carry out -- or help carry out -- a nuclear weapons test explosion which is intended to develop or improve nuclear weapons;
- requires Canadian industry to report large chemical explosions which could be confused with a nuclear explosion;
- sets out the respective roles of the departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Natural Resources Canada and Health Canada.

Once passed by Parliament, the legislation will allow Canada to ratify the Treaty.

## **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

Successive Canadian Governments have advocated a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) fulfils this longtime pursuit by Canada. In November 1993, the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament received a strong mandate from the United Nations General Assembly to negotiate such a treaty. These negotiations were successful and on September 24, 1996, the Treaty was opened for signature in New York and as of September 1, 1998, has been signed by 150 nations. Canada was among the first states to sign the CTBT that day.