

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

We are convinced that a multilaterally-negotiated CTB will constitute one of the main universal instruments to hold back nuclear-weapons proliferation, both vertical as well as horizontal, and to reverse the nuclear arms race in this post-cold-war era.

My delegation is heartened by the decision of the Conference to initiate the negotiation to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which has long been a goal of the international community in this regard, I wish to register my delegation's sincere appreciation to the delegations of Australia, Mexico and Nigeria who jointly put forward the original proposal, thus enabling us to take the above decision. Sri Lanka fully shares the thrust and the main objective of this proposal, namely to give a negotiating mandate to the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban to undertake multilateral negotiation to conclude a universally applicable and internationally verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The draft mandate presented by Australia in keeping with the spirit of the above proposal equally deserves the support of the member States.

As the Chairman of the G-21 stated, I wish to underline the desirability of commencing consultations in the Ad Hoc Committee, beginning in the inter-sessional period this year, with a view to concluding negotiation of a CTB by the end of 1994.

My delegation recognizes the considerable preparatory inputs so far contributed by the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB under the skilful guidance of Ambassador Tanaka of Japan and his predecessors. We also note with satisfaction the valuable contribution of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events and other experts who presented various non-seismic verification methods. My delegation associates itself with the views of many other delegations that the verification regime, being one of the most important aspects of the CTB, should be an internationally verifiable one. In this context, the seismic methods should constitute the core of such a verification regime, due to the fact that the international community in general has wider accessibility to such standard techniques and in view of their cost-effectiveness in comparison to non-seismic techniques.

My delegation also appreciated the valuable contribution of the Swedish delegation, particularly by presenting its revised draft proposal for a CTB which is now being studied in our capital. While awaiting observations from relevant national authorities, we hope that this draft proposal will receive the consideration it merits when the Ad Hoc Committee commences its negotiations.