

## **Arms Control and Non-Proliferation**

On May 11, 1995, 175 countries, including Canada, agreed to extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely and unconditionally, and to complete negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty by 1996. The NPT is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its indefinite extension has been a key Canadian objective, outlined in the Canadian government's Foreign Policy Statement.

All participants at the NPT Review Conference, including nuclear-weapons states, also made a commitment to the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and "Strengthened Reviews" of the functioning of the treaty.

Since May, three of the five nuclear-weapons states (France, the United States and the United Kingdom) have committed themselves to a zero-threshold CTBT, where no tests would ever be permitted. This has given real impetus to ongoing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Efforts are underway to get similar assurances from Russia and China.

In the Principles and Objectives, agreed during the NPT extension discussions, all states agreed to immediately begin negotiations for the cut-off convention to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. These negotiations have not yet commenced. The principal stumbling block seems to be whether the scope of the new treaty should include existing stocks of fissionable materials. Canada's intention is to see an early start to these negotiations, at the very least at the level of technical experts.

Despite an auspicious beginning, both China and France carried out nuclear test explosions this year. Continued testing by these two countries has generated strong international reaction and criticism. The issue likely will be raised at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, given that strongest reactions have come from Australia, New Zealand and other South Pacific countries. Nearly all Commonwealth countries have acceded to or ratified the NPT.

On the issue of the Chemical Weapons Convention, more than 150 countries have signed the treaty since it was opened for signature in 1993. Sixty-five ratifications are required for entry into force. Canada became the 40th country when it ratified the treaty on September 26 of this year.