

(Mr. Gehr, Austria)

This trend came into view on 24 September last year, when the United States Congress passed the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill prohibiting testing after 30 September 1996, unless another State conducts a nuclear test thereafter.

Anyway, the extension of the three moratoria is an indication of the validity of the argument that the safety of nuclear arsenals can nowadays be controlled through methods other than nuclear explosions.

My delegation has equally taken note of the commitments made by some nuclear Powers to move towards a multilateral process aiming at achieving a CTBT. Austria cannot but warmly welcome this development, which will prove instrumental in enhancing the confidence of all nations in the continuity and reliability of the disarmament policy of those nuclear Powers.

Austria's conviction that a comprehensive CTBT verification system is both necessary and possible has lately been more than confirmed. It is indeed the perspective of such a system which motivated Austria's active participation in the Group of Scientific Experts (GSE).

As to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban itself, we have been witnessing during the last session an impressive display of various methods available for the verification of a CTBT. Thereby, we have been given a welcome opportunity to reassess the advantages and shortcomings of each of the non-seismic monitoring techniques. I am sure that studies and discussions on how the various techniques could complement each other would enhance the work on NTB verification significantly. However, it is now time to move a step further.

The need for progress on our way to a CTBT is what induces my delegation now to pay tribute to the contributions Sweden has made in favour of the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In particular, the revised version of its CTBT draft (CD/1202) is in our view a very timely initiative. Three new elements which were outlined by Ambassador Norberg on 3 June 1993 do, in our view, carry considerable weight: firstly, the scope of the prohibition is a really comprehensive one, since it encompasses so-called peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs); secondly, the Swedish CTBT draft favours an agreement of unlimited duration; finally, the new draft entrusts the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the implementation of its verification provisions rather than calling for the creation of additional bureaucratic machinery. This option has undeniable merits from the point of view of practical efficiency and cost-effectiveness. In this connection, we believe that there would indeed be considerable benefit in making use of the IAEA's experience. We therefore support the view expressed by the Australian delegation on 3 August 1993 to invite a representative of this organization to assist the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

In any case, the time is now ripe for preparations for a swift start to CTBT negotiations early next year with a view to completing them by 1995. The Swedish draft should be a good basis for these negotiations. 1995 will be a crucial date for nuclear arms control, since the NPT Extension and Review