



CANADA AND THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

On September 10, 1996, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted at a special meeting of the 50th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy will sign the CTBT on behalf of Canada at the opening of the 51st session of the UNGA.

The signing of the CTBT represents the achievement of one of Canada's long-standing foreign policy objectives: the permanent prohibition of nuclear test explosions. From a Canadian perspective, the CTBT will:

- ensure the integrity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and facilitate future progress on other nuclear disarmament agreements;
- increase the pressure on "threshold" countries to disavow nuclear weapons; and
- inhibit the ability of nuclear weapons states to develop new generations of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty, which was the subject of 40 years of effort, is considered the single most critical building block in the process leading to complete nuclear disarmament.

The CTBT includes extensive verification measures designed to deter potential violators. Canada will be playing a practical, active role in enforcing the terms of the Treaty through the 15 Canada-based stations that will be used as part of the International Monitoring System (IMS), all of which will provide data on seismic and other activity that might be evidence of a nuclear test explosion. These stations — nine seismic, four radionuclide, one hydracoustic and one infrasound — are located across the country.

The National Authority and the National Data Centre will be responsible for ensuring that Canada meets its obligations under the Treaty. The National Authority, has been established and will be located in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Among its many activities, it will provide reports to the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) located in Vienna.

The CTBTO has the right to investigate suspicious activities in participating countries. As large Canadian mining explosions may be picked up by the IMS seismic network, the Canadian mining industry will be asked to provide, on a voluntary basis, data on any blasts in excess of 300 tonnes of TNT-equivalent.

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