

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

... Last Tuesday, 10 August 1993, the Conference on Disarmament achieved a genuine breakthrough. The Conference on Disarmament decided to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive test ban. Furthermore, the Conference requested the Chairman of its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban to make the necessary arrangements to conduct consultations during the period between 3 September and 17 January on the specific mandate for, and the organization of, the negotiation.

The breakthrough on the test-ban negotiations has to be perceived in the broader context of general political developments outside the Conference, especially those that recently occurred. Inside the Conference the breakthrough was greatly facilitated by the recent initiative taken by the delegations of Australia, Mexico and Nigeria to introduce a pertinent draft decision. I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to those three delegations, as well as to the then President, Ambassador Pérez Novoa, who availed himself in a most professional way of the opportunity offered.

This is an achievement by itself. Let us take advantage of this window of opportunity and not lose time on trivial procedures. Allow me, to present briefly the Netherlands' conceptualization of the test ban as an arms-control measure. Secondly, I would like to map out the views of my delegation on the specific modalities for our future negotiations.

First, the place of a test ban as an arms-control measure. We did at the time welcome the declaration of Vancouver of 4 April 1993 in which Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed that negotiations on a multilateral nuclear test ban should commence at an early date. Looking at this decision in perspective, one could say that it was a landmark in a process: both a political one which saw a major transformation of the situation in Europe; and a corresponding evolutionary process in the notion of security: from nuclear forces becoming weapons of last resort in 1990, to important arms-control agreements (START-I, the Lisbon Protocol and START-II), to increased attention to non-proliferation in a diffuse and volatile world.

The recent decisions of the Presidents of France, Russia and the United States of 2 July to extend the moratoria on nuclear testing and thus to seek an end to nuclear testing altogether are another landmark in that process. Nuclear arms control and disarmament and the different security equation in the 1990s have thus greatly facilitated opportunities for negotiations on a comprehensive test ban.

According to the Netherlands, an end to nuclear testing fits into the broad picture of international security related to nuclear weapons, both nuclear arms control and disarmament and the goal of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is of