

Ratification of UN-backed nuclear treaty nears milestone of 150 countries

19 August 2009 – The total number of countries that have ratified the United Nations-backed Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (**CTBT**) has inched closer to 150 after Liberia ratified the agreement this week.

Liberia's ratification on Monday brings the total number of countries having ratified the CTBT to 149, according to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (**CTBTO**).

The West African nation's move also means that the pact has 51 signatures and 37 ratifications out of the 53 countries on the continent, where the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, went into effect last month.

To date, 181 States worldwide have signed the pact, which was adopted by the General Assembly in September 1996 to ban any nuclear-test explosions anywhere.

It will enter into force 180 days after all 44 of the States mentioned in Annex 2 of the Treaty – those which possessed nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons technology at the time it opened for signature in 1996 – have ratified it. So far, 35 of these nations, including France, Russia and the United Kingdom, have ratified it, but China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United States and Iran, among other nations, have not.

In September, US President Barack Obama is scheduled to chair a meeting of the Security Council focusing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the CTBT.

"A world without nuclear weapons may be distant, but it is no longer just a dream," Mr. Ban said earlier this month in a **message** to the Seventh General Conference of Mayors for Peace, which has helped inform millions of people around the world about the catastrophic effects of the 1945 nuclear bombings in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

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