Executive Summary

Throughout the reporting period, the Commission organized key activities including in-person introductory courses on the CTBT, hosted the Science Diplomacy Symposium, and conducted workshops for diplomats and senior officials in New York, Vienna, and Banjul. The seventh CTBT Science and Technology Conference in Vienna broadened engagement in test-ban monitoring. The CTBTO’s Knowledge and Training Portal (KTP) continued to support global disarmament and non-proliferation education through updated online learning modules. Collaboration with UNODA through the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme and active involvement of the CTBTO Youth Group and Young Professionals Network furthered efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation education. During the reporting period, the Commission facilitated the participation of 33 technical experts from 30 developing countries in official meetings, while the CTBTO Mentoring Programme supported early-career women in STEM from underrepresented regions, completing two successful cycles and launching a third.

Throughout the reporting period, the Commission organized in-person introductory courses on the CTBT and its verification technologies and applications. This included the CTBT Science Diplomacy Symposium (December 2022) and three workshops targeting diplomats and senior officials: in New York (September 2023), Vienna (October 2023), and Banjul (May 2024). The CTBTO’s Knowledge and Training Portal (KTP), an e-learning platform serving the online training, education and outreach needs of the global disarmament and non-proliferation community, also remained available during this period. The online learning modules are currently being updated to ensure the content remains relevant.

The Commission also supported the participation of 33 technical experts from 30 developing countries in official technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission through its Technical Experts Support Programme (TESP). Since its inception in 2007, TESP has supported 87 experts from 53 States Signatories, of whom 25 were female experts.

The seventh Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Science and Technology Conference was convened in Vienna from 19 to 23 June 2023 to broaden the community engaged in test-ban monitoring and promote the wider civil and scientific applications of the verification regime. The conference brought scientists, academics, and high-level officials together in a hybrid format to review the verification regime's performance and explore scientific and technological advances in nuclear test monitoring.

As part of its long-standing collaboration with UNODA, the Commission welcomed Fellows from the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme in September 2023. During the CTBTO segment, the Fellows actively explored the political, legal and technical aspects of the Treaty and had the opportunity to meet and interact with the Executive Secretary. Additionally, the Fellows visited the technical facilities and
toured the OSI Directed Exercises, hosted at the military training base 'Benedek-Kaserne' in Bruckneudorf, Austria.

The CTBTO Youth Group (CYG), with nearly 1,300 members from 125 States, actively engaged in CTBTO events and in a wide range of activities to promote the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty. In December 2023, the CYG Task Force launched the CYG Art Competition on the theme of “CTBT: a world with nuclear tests vs. a world without nuclear tests”, providing CYG members with a platform to express their creativity and contribute to the global call for a nuclear test ban.

Two editions of the CTBTO Research Fellowship were organised during the reporting period. These included 52 young professionals representing the new generation of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament experts. The fellows were provided an opportunity to build their professional network by connecting them with prominent experts and officials, as well as to conduct and publish research on CTBT-related issues. In total, 18 research papers on CTBT-related issues were published by CTBTO in an annual electronic magazine.

The CTBT Young Professionals Network (YPN), established in 2018 as a joint initiative between the Commission and Norway, is a community of young scientists and technical professionals working on the monitoring and verification elements of the CTBT. The YPN continued its work to pass on knowledge and expertise on nuclear test ban verification technologies to the new generation of experts.

Lastly, the Commission launched the CTBTO Mentoring Programme to promote early-career women in STEM from under-represented geographical regions. The Programme aims to support gender equality, geographical diversity and the empowerment of the next generation. Two cycles of the programme have successfully been completed; the third phase is currently ongoing. The first two-month cycle supported 12 women from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, South Asia, South-East Asia, the Pacific, and the Far East. The participants were paired with mentors from the technical divisions of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS): the International Monitoring System Division, the International Data Centre Division, and the On-site Inspection Division.

The second cycle featured an 8-month programme, with a talented cohort of 13 women selected from across the globe. After completing the programme, mentees from both cycles were eligible to participate as observers at regional training courses conducted for CTBT on-site surrogate inspectors, upon nomination by the respective Permanent Mission. Six out of 12 mentees from the first cycle received nominations to participate as observers, and two additional mentees were nominated to be trained as future surrogate inspectors. For the second cycle, five mentees were nominated to participate as observers in a similar training course. Mentees from both cycles were also invited to participate as speakers at CTBTO’s flagship Science and Technology Conference in June 2023.

In the third iteration of the programme, which commenced in May 2024, 26 mentees from all six geographical regions have been selected to participate. In a new pilot initiative, the 26 mentees have been paired with experts from National Data Centres and national laboratories of States Signatories that contribute to the work of the CTBTO, along with the experts from the CTBTO’s technical divisions.

The Commission continued to develop partnerships with institutions to ensure an inclusive engagement and enable all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the international norm against nuclear testing and the sustainment of the verification regime.