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PRIME MINISTER

COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

Australia warmly welcomes the adoption of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the United Nations General Assembly.

The CTBT is a milestone in international efforts to address the threat to global security posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is a vital step towards the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, as agreed by the international community in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The CTBT would ban nuclear weapon tests for all time and act as a major impediment to the development of new generations of nuclear weapons.

I urge all nations to join Australia in signing and ratifying the CTBT so that it can be implemented as soon as possible.

Australians can be pleased with the part we have played in achieving this outcome.

Australia has been an active participant in negotiations on the treaty from the beginning. I would like to acknowledge the important role of the previous government in advancing the cause of a treaty.

Subsequently, my government has played a substantial role in bringing negotiations on the treaty to a successful conclusion.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, has played a leading role in bringing the treaty to the UN General Assembly for its successful adoption. He will sign the treaty on behalf of Australia later this month in New York.

11 September 1996