
Remarks delivered by
Mr Xiaoning Wang
Director, Legal and External Relations Division

on behalf of
Dr Lassina Zerbo
Executive Secretary, Preparatory Commission for the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Handover Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter

9 March 2018

Mr Chairman,
Ambassador Najafi,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Dr Lassina Zerbo.

In conveying his regret for not being in Vienna on this important occasion, Dr Zerbo asked me to extend his most sincere congratulations to Ambassador Carlos Alberto Játiva Naranjo on his new responsibilities, and warmly thank Ambassador Reza Najafi for his kind invitation to attend this year's handover ceremony of the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter.

The Group of 77 represents the majority of CTBTO stakeholders. A large portion of CTBTO staff members also hail from G-77 countries. But the strongest connection between the G-77 and the CTBTO lies without a doubt in our shared objectives and ideals: multilateralism and cooperation, peace and security.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty makes an immeasurable contribution to the very fabric that brought together the States that signed the *Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries* in 1964.

By banning nuclear test explosions, the CTBT brings us closer to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons – and, as such, a safer and more secure planet. By doing so, it helps create the conditions for increased cooperation and prosperity.

Its state-of-the-art monitoring system is fully capable of fulfilling its purpose of detecting nuclear test explosions by anyone, anywhere – without any distinction based on nuclear status or political considerations.

Furthermore, the civil and scientific applications of the Treaty's monitoring technologies can also be used to contribute in very tangible ways to development and human well-being, including in the context of the UN sustainable development goals.

To ensure that all States – large and small – are able to reap these benefits and partake in Treaty verification on an equal footing, an integrated capacity-building and training programme helps countries develop their capabilities in order to make full use of the data collected by the International Monitoring System.

In this regard, I encourage G-77 countries to continue making use of the opportunities offered by the CTBTO to develop National Data Centres and train data analysts and station operators. It is heartening that next week's *Training Course on NDC Capacity Building* includes 10 representatives from G-77 countries among its 14 participants.

In addition, a CTBT Science Diplomacy Symposium is to be held from 21 May to 1 June 2018. While the Symposium will be based upon the success of past outreach and education activities undertaken through the Integrated Capacity Building framework, its scope will be expanded by providing tailored work streams for certain groups of participant. I look forward to welcoming a large number of participants from the G-77.

Also in the context of capacity-building, the Commission continues to implement a project to facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries in its official technical meetings. In 2017, the project supported the participation of experts from 12 States who took part in the Forty-Eighth and Forty-Ninth sessions of Working Group B. The experts also benefited from technical discussions with CTBTO staff on key verification related issues. Since its inception in 2007, the project has supported 42 experts from 35 States, including 13 women.

In the same vein, it is also auspicious for the CTBTO that the Chairmanship of the Group should go to Ecuador only months after the inauguration of its two CTBT stations in the Galápagos. Developed in record time with exemplary support by our partners in Ecuador, these facilities will greatly enhance regional coverage for Latin America and the Pacific.

I am confident that your country, Mr Chairman, will serve as an inspiration for others to follow by developing their own CTBT capabilities and making full use of the treasure-trove of data and services offered by the CTBTO.

I am also confident that, in such troubled and uncertain times, the Group of 77 will, more than ever, extend its resolve and support to ensure that this monumental political achievement and technical accomplishment is able to fulfil its praiseworthy destiny – that of a near-universal instrument designed to be the next step towards achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary, I would like to reiterate the continued readiness of the CTBTO to further deepen its partnership with the Group of 77 and explore new avenues for cooperation with its Member States. In this context I would like to inform you that recently Dr Zerbo has appointed Dr Mohammad Hassan Daryaei, his Special Assistant, as a focal point for dealing with issues related to the G77 and NAM countries which is a clear indication of our firm determination for enhancing our trustful relationship with the G77.

I commend Ambassador Najafi for having dedicated himself to the 2017 Chairmanship of the Group with such distinction, and look forward to working with Ambassador Játiva Naranjo to continue developing the productive and cordial relations that have always existed between the Group of 77 and the CTBTO.

Thank you.