



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 17TH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP A, VIENNA, 4-7 MARCH 2002 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VICTOR G. GARCIA III, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of State Signatories of the Group of 77 and China, I am pleased to see you chairing the 17th session of Working Group A and assure you of our full cooperation. The Group is pleased to welcome Belize, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as new members.

The Group has agreed to express its views on the following issues which will be considered during the present meeting of Working Group A.

I. Possible reduction of the annual number of sessions of the Preparatory Commission from 2003 onwards (CTBT/PTS/INF.483).

Mr. Chairman,

According to the proposal made by the PTS the objective of this reduction is to reduce the workload of delegations, alleviate the burden of report writing on PTS staff and allow them more time for practical work as well as to obtain certain financial savings. The Group considers that this is a valuable and useful attempt and will approach this request with the understanding that this will not affect the efficiency of the work of the PTS and that the process of budget preparation will remain transparent and State Signatories be provided with sufficient time to give their guidance on the matter. In this respect the Group is of the opinion that the proposal to reduce one session of the Prep Com if adopted should be complemented by the following reductions of its subsidiary bodies;

1. Working Group A sessions should be reduced to two per year, each of them for a duration of five days, with full interpretation.
2. Working Group B sessions should be maintained at three sessions per year but their duration reduced to two weeks each. By doing so the quality of the technical work would not be affected, as is clearly expressed in the Report of the External Evaluation Team on the International Monitoring System document CTBT/WGB-17/INF.3. This report recommends that the meetings of WGB, addressing IMS and IDC matters should be reduced in frequency, to twice a year.
3. Concerning the Advisory Group, the G-77 and China is of the view that the current schedule of its meetings should be modified in relation to the work of Working Group A.

II. Taking into account the actual prospects of entry into force of the treaty and lessons which might be learned by further work of Prep Com, the Group believes that discussion on draft rules of procedure for the future CTBTO is not an urgent need. Therefore the Group proposes the postponement of this discussion to a later stage.

III. We value the proposal to conclude of an agreement between Prep Com and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and encourage similar agreements with other regional intergovernmental organizations, in particular those useful in promoting the interests of the Prep Com.

IV. International Cooperation

1. The Group welcomes the status report submitted by Japan as contained in document CTBT/WGB-17/JP/1. The Group considers that this initiative will enhance the scope and bring support to the PTS/CTBTO training programmes for developing countries. In this regard the Group welcomes the possibility of renewing the programme of the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation and calls upon the PTS to give further consideration to this issue. In order to facilitate a broader participation of State Signatories from developing countries in technical meetings with experts from capitals, the Group considers that the PTS could explore mechanisms for financing their participation within available resources.

Finally, as stated already during last year's April Prep Com, the Group is of the opinion that the PTS should cooperate with the Member States in order to identify possible solutions to impediments preventing them from making their payments, as recommended by the X Prep-Com in November 1999, including constitutional impediments.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.