



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 21ST SESSION OF WORKING GROUP A, VIENNA, 25-28 JUNE 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 21st session of Working Group A and assure you of our full cooperation. The Group appreciates the information provided by the Executive Secretary in his report contained in document CTBT/WGA-21/INF.3.

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

1. On the possible reduction of the annual number of sessions of the Preparatory Commission from 2003 onwards, the Group maintains its previously stated view that it is a valuable and useful attempt, which, if adopted should be complemented by the reduction of the sessions of its subsidiary bodies, with the understanding that this will not affect the efficiency of the work of the PTS, especially the review and adoption of the budget.

The Group is of the view that the sessions of WGA should be reduced to two per year (5 days each with full interpretation) and the length of the three sessions of WGB to two weeks and the Advisory Group sessions should be modified in relation to the work of WGA.

2. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to nuclear weapon free zones agreements as useful instruments for nuclear non- proliferation and disarmament and therefore the Group supports the proposal to conclude an agreement between the Prep Com and the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), as presented by the Executive Secretary in document CTBT/PTS/INF/489/Rev.1. Thus we expect that a recommendation in this direction should be adopted during the current session. The Group also calls for the start of the negotiation process in order to reach similar agreements with other nuclear weapon free zones.

3. The Group believes that the Human Resources issues in the PTS should be treated in an open and transparent approach. In our view the External Evaluation Report should be considered only as one aspect of this issue. The Cedar Report includes some useful recommendations, and we believe that appropriate follow-up will mitigate its negative impacts. Therefore it is the responsibility of the PTS, under the guidance and supervision of the Prep Com, to prioritize the recommendations and implement some of them without any additional costs.

4. With reference to the 2003 Programme and Budget Proposals contained in CTBT/PTS/INF.511, the Group is of the view that the proposal of US\$ 86.3 million is high and should be reduced. Therefore, the Group would like to ask the PTS to make every effort to reduce this amount and reflect it in the revised Programme and Budget document, which will be considered at a later stage. The Group notes that the post-certification costs have been increased substantially (approximately US\$ 7.6 million as compared to US\$ 3.2 million in 2002). This amount is very high and should be reduced in the light of the outcome of WGB discussion of Draft Guidelines for testing provisional operation and maintenance of certified IMS stations. Additionally, significant reductions could also be made in inter-alia, consultant and travel fees, in maintenance and acquisition of software, out of contract costs as well as in contracted and temporary services.

5. 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.