



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 23RD SESSION OF PREP-COM, 15-19 NOVEMBER 2004, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR TAOUS FEROUKHI, PR OF ALGERIA

Mr. Chairman,

The Group would like to take this opportunity to express its deep sense of grief on the sad demise of HE Mr Yasser Arafat, the President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and wishes to convey its sympathy to the bereaved family and the Palestinian people.

Mr. Chairman,

1. It is my pleasure, on behalf of the States Signatories of the G-77 and China, to convey to you the Group's best wishes as you assume the Chairmanship of the 23rd Session of the Preparatory Commission. We have the utmost confidence that under your leadership the present session shall be able to achieve its most fruitful results, and the Group wishes to assure you of our support and cooperation.

2. The Group also wishes to express deep appreciation to the Secretariat for its work and preparations for making this session a success and thanks the PTS Executive Secretary, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann, for his supplementary oral report. As it were, we now have a total of 173 States that have signed the Treaty, out of which a total of 119 States have ratified, including 33 of the 44 Annex 2 States. The Group welcomes the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Liechtenstein, Tunisia and Tanzania for recently ratifying the Treaty. These new ratifications underscore the importance given by developing countries to the non-proliferation regime.

3. Allow me now to address the various agenda items. Recognizing that there are many important issues deserving our attention, the Group of 77 and China would like to comment on some of these items as they are put forward in our draft agenda.

4. On Item 2 - document CTBT/PC-23/INF.1 - Report of the Executive Secretary, the Group favourably notes the substantial progress made in the 7 Major Programmes of the CTBT. On the International Monitoring System (IMS), the PTS achieved considerable work in having certified 96 IMS facilities out of a total of 337 monitoring facilities worldwide. However, a closer look at these statistics would suggest that we do need to continue the certification process for the other IMS facilities towards ensuring the full operationalization of the CTBT verification regime at entry into force (EIF) of the Treaty.

5. The G-77 and China attaches great importance to the objectives of International Cooperation activities as stipulated in paragraph 12 of Article IV of the Treaty, including facilitation of the fullest possible exchange of technologies relating to the verification system, legal assistance, capacity building and application of those technologies for peaceful purposes. The Group believes that workshops and training courses are important not only in enhancing national skills to implement the Treaty but also for promoting awareness about it. Therefore, the Group encourages the PTS to provide for the wider participation of developing countries in such activities. The Group also considers the need for the PTS to play a more active role in promoting the NDCs of developing countries, especially in providing hardware and software.

6. As for the rest of the Report of the Executive Secretary, the Group congratulates the PTS for its efforts with respect to the other Major Programmes relating to the International Data Centre (IDC), on Communications, On-Site Inspection (OSI), Evaluation, and Administration, Coordination and Support.

Mr. Chairman,

7. On Item 4 concerning the Report of Working Group B as dealt with in document CTBT/WGB-23/1, the Group wishes to endorse the draft work programme of WGB for 2005 as contained in paragraph 70 thereof. The Group believes that the draft work programme basically follows the thematic objectives of the CTBTO.

8. The Group, however, expresses its concern affecting several technical issues facing WGB. For instance, as the PTS reviews the results of the preparatory phase of the first system-wide performance test (SPT1), it is hoped that the resulting data analysis be formulated in such a manner to be understandable by all CTBTO signatory States.

9. While the only purpose of the proposed system-wide performance test (SPT1) is to evaluate the whole system and that there are no verification related activities for the system before the Treaty's EIF, we are of the view that the test should be done within a limited time frame, and that the cost of the exercise should be absorbed within existing resources, as far as practicable.

10. The Group also feels that workshops on the civil and scientific uses of IMS data, using seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide technologies, and IDC products can lead to important civil and scientific applications and further contribute to the promotion of the Treaty.

11. On IDC computer technology, while the Group endorses the move for the PTS to gradually carry out the transition to 'open source' computer operating systems, it is hoped that the resulting computer infrastructure should result in greater flexibility and more cost effective data management.

12. In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, and with the text on the establishment of the PrepCom and due to the development in the work of the PTS, we welcome the work on developing a confidentiality policy for the PTS. The confidentiality policy should create a strict and transparent regime for handling all data and information available to the PTS. We believe that a comprehensive approach is necessary for the confidentiality policy of the PTS. We believe that more time in WGB discussions should be allocated to this important task.

13. We urge all States Signatories to actively participate in financing the OSI Major Programme in order to continue necessary preparations for the establishment of the OSI regime at EIF of the Treaty. This should include testing and evaluation of all OSI equipment, establishing supporting infrastructure and preparing a comprehensive programme for the training of inspectors and assistants. The Group looks forward to the continuation of work on the OSI Operational Manual based on experience gained from workshops, tabletop exercises and field experiments.

Mr. Chairman,

14. On Item 7 concerning the draft 2005 Programme and Budget proposal, the Group wishes to reiterate budget principles that have been mentioned in its previous statements and in various WGA and WGB meetings. While the G-77 and China appreciate the efforts of the PTS in trying to keep the 2005 Budget and PTS staffing profile at 2004 levels, organizational efficiency can still be improved by prioritizing and reallocating resources in a manner that reflects the evolving activities of the PTS. We are of the opinion that by prioritizing and reallocating the resources the PTS can easily accommodate changes without programmatic increases even as a majority of the stations have been site surveyed, installed and are being certified.

15. We request that the 2006 Budget be prepared bearing in mind national budgetary constraints and be maintained at the 2004 Budget level.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The Group would like to stress that the recommendations for enhancing security measures should be discussed by the Secretariat with States Signatories for a cost efficient and practical approach based upon local security needs.

Mr. Chairman,

17. On Item 13 regarding the Progress Report on the Review of the PTS Organizational Structure as dealt with in document CTBT/PC-23/INF.2, the Group takes note of the progress report submitted by the External Review Team. We wish to endorse the Team continue with its work, and the Group looks forward for the early submission of the Team's final report.

18. From the viewpoint of the Group, the tasks of the PTS are based on two main pillars: political and technical issues. However, the balance between political and technical tasks of the PTS should be maintained in the restructuring process considering the enhancement of coordination and cost efficiency. We reiterate that the recommendations of the Review Team be implemented only after thorough review by the States Signatories via consultation within the Working Groups and the PrepCom.

19. The Group believes that human resources are indeed critical components of the PTS and of the CTBT Organization. However, the Group notes that the PTS present staffing profile may need further geographical realignment as 45% of the PTS staff has come from North American and Western European States. It is the hope of the Group that, in future PTS staff requirements, this relative imbalance in the staff profile can be rectified via a continuing need to improve PTS recruitment policies, more transparency and more clarified accountabilities. While there could be some shifts in emphasis towards the range of operations in the PTS, the Group hopes that this disparity in the PTS staff profile can still be minimized further.

20. Equitable geographical representation and high standards of expertise, competence, integrity and experience shall be the main criteria for the appointment of PTS staff. The Group reaffirms the criteria for recruitment of the staff that have been clearly stipulated in paragraph 50 of Article II of the Treaty, and firmly believes that any introduction of other new criteria such as linking recruitment with monetary contribution is beyond the text of the Treaty. The Group follows the issue of equitable geographical representation in the PTS and looks forward to future improvements on this matter.

21. The Group expects that in the future the chairmanships of the Subsidiary Organs of the PrepCom should also reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation.

22. The Group believes that the human resources issues in the PTS should continue to be treated in an open and transparent approach according to existing staff rules and regulations. Therefore, the Group strongly supports the Commission's non-career policy, especially the seven-year limit service in the PTS, as outlined in its staff rules and regulations, and the administrative directive on recruitment, appointment, reappointment and tenure. Although it is the prerogative of the Executive Secretary to make some exceptions to the service limit in accordance with Administrative Directive No. 20 (Rev.2), in order to retain essential expertise or institutional memory in the PTS, these shall be extraordinary exceptions reported to the Preparatory Commission in accordance with Administrative Directive No. 20 (Rev.2) and WGA reports.

23. We take note of the fact that the basis for the judgement of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) to rule out the decision of the Executive Secretary does not affect the non-career policy and seven-year limit for staff contracts. We request that the PTS take due care and ensure that current and future contracts duly meet the ruling's requirements.

Mr. Chairman,

24. With regard to the restructuring of the PTS, the Group believes that all the elements of the verification regime of the Treaty including the IMS, IDC, GCI and OSI are important in establishing a balanced

approach to the Treaty.

25. We also encourage the External Review Team to continue exploring ways and means to enhance participation of the experts of developing countries in WGB discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

26. On Item 16 regarding the Appointment of the Executive Secretary as contained in CTBT/PC-22/1/Annex VII, the Group deeply appreciates your efforts and the informal consultations held under your chairmanship for reaching consensus on the modalities of tenure for the appointment of a future Executive Secretary. We support the criterion that the next Executive Secretary must come from a ratifying State. The Group reiterates that there must be no linkage between the fulfilment of financial obligations of a signatory State and the selection of the future Executive Secretary, because it is unprecedented, bereft of any legal bases and no reference in this respect was made in the Treaty or in the Rules of Procedure. Moreover, the Group sees any attempt at establishing a linkage will deprive small and medium States Signatories of their inherent right to propose candidates for the post of Executive Secretary.

27. The Group of 77 and China nonetheless wishes to emphasize the importance it attaches to the financial stability of the Commission, which is a matter of budgetary concern rather than an issue concerning the selection of candidates for the post of Executive Secretary or any other post in the PTS. The Group would like to take this opportunity to urge all States Signatories that have not yet done so to pay their financial contributions in full and on time.

28. In the selection of the new Executive Secretary, paramount importance should be attached to the principle of fair geographical representation. The Group firmly believes that the new Executive Secretary should be a candidate from a developing country with the highest quality of competence and integrity and demonstrated diplomatic and managerial skills and experience to assist in the work of the Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

29. The Group of 77 and China supports the convening of the Article XIV Conference in 2005. In doing so, we are driven by the desire to promote the EIF of the Treaty, which constitutes a specific stage in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and is also one of the key objectives of the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and therefore of strengthening the multilateral regime in this field.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.