



VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 29TH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION (12-15 NOVEMBER 2007), DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MR. SAYED GALAL ELAMIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SUDAN

Chairperson,

At the outset, let me express the sincere appreciation of the State Signatories of the Group of 77 and China in seeing you chairing the 29th session of the PrepCom. The Group believes that under your stewardship, discussions will lead to fruitful conclusions and I assure you of our full cooperation.

The Group would also like to thank the Executive Secretary for his oral and written reports and would like to express its views on the following agenda items, which will be considered during the present meeting of the Preparatory Commission:

AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF WORKING GROUP B

Chairperson,

The Group would like to thank Mr. Hein Haak, Chairperson of Working Group B for presenting the report of the 29th Session of WGB and takes note of it.

Regarding the re-examination of the duration and organization of WGB meetings, the Group thanks the Chair of Working Group B for all his efforts in this regard. The Group welcomes that by the new schedule of the meetings there would be no parallel session in WGB. The Group underlines that the duration of the WGB meetings should also be re-examined in a way that the meetings of WGB be held two times in a year, thus the financial burden on States Signatories be reduced. In this context the Group takes note that the June meeting of WGB in 2008 is only a contingency, and would be convened for discussions on IFE08 if so decided by the 30th Session of WGB. The Group expects that the process of streamlining and reduction of the meetings of WGB continue in 2008 for the coming years.

With respect to the OSI Integrated Field Exercise in 2008, the Group notes that the training cycle of the potential participants for this important exercise is ongoing. While the Group expects to receive a report of the two training courses held in France and Hungary, the following comments need to be addressed in this regard;

The training section should use the lessons learned from the previous exercises in order to promote the organization and implementation of the training courses. In this context the training section requires the experience and contribution of other sections in particular the Methodology as well as Evaluation Sections. For the successful implementation of the IFE08, the proper evaluation of the training courses in particular from the viewpoint of organization, planning and preparedness of the participants is essential.

Concerning the participants in IFE08 and the related training courses, the Group believes that further to the importance of the principle of the equitable geographical representation, the number of participants from each country should also be limited. In this regard the Group expects to receive an updated report from the training section as soon as possible.

The Group also believes that the religious and cultural requirements of participants for the IFE08, related

training courses and all other OSI future activities need to be properly addressed.

AGENDA ITEM 4 & 5: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF WORKING GROUP A and ADVISORY GROUP REPORT

Chairperson,

The Group wishes to extend its appreciation to Ambassador Abdulkadir Bin Rimdap, Chairperson of WGA for presenting the report on the 32nd session of WGA. The Group also thanks Mr Andre Gue and members of the Advisory Group for preparing the report of the 29th meeting of Advisory Group and takes note of it.

With respect to the matters related to payment of the assessed contributions, the Group notes that the current financial challenge resulted from uncertainties about the timing and the amounts of the payments. The Group takes note that the Advisory Group explored the ways to address this issue and proposed a temporary solution in this regard. The Group notes that the Advisory Group recommended that, on an exceptional basis, the 2007 General Fund unused obligating authority be extended until 31 December 2008. The Group takes note of this recommendation which was adopted by WGA, and believes that this is only a temporary solution, thus not solve the main problem in the long term.

Regarding the proposal for measures to facilitate the payment of contributions from States Signatories in arrears and the idea of payment plan, as implemented in some other international organizations, the Group welcomes such a proposal since it may encourage States Signatories to address their arrears in assessed contributions and have their voting rights restored. The Group also proposes that the PTS cooperates with States Signatories in order to identify other possible solutions to impediments preventing them from making their payments.

Chairperson,

With regard to the implementation of the Pilot Project for financing the participation of technical experts from developing countries in WGB meetings, the Group thanks the PTS for preparing the report as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.920. The Group expresses its satisfaction on the successful implementation of this project and is pleased that one of the experts has been appointed as a new WGB Task Leader. As indicated by this report the inputs of the experts contributed to further development of the e-learning system as a key capacity building tool for the future.

The Group shares the view of the related experts, donors and the PTS that this project was a valuable and successful initiative, and that should continue with more participants in the future. As indicated by this report, "it is clear that the project had substantial capacity building and other benefits, and contributed to enhancing the input of developing countries to official technical meetings of the Commission." The Group also shares the view of the donors on the importance of sustainability of this project in all its aspects.

Chairperson,

The Group also appreciates States Signatories which contributed to this project. However, the Group is concerned that the budget for continuation of this project may not be sufficient for the next year. In this context the Group supports the recommendation of the PTS on the improvement of project performance, including sufficient and sustainable funding. The Group believes that a combination of inter alia voluntary contributions from States Signatories and relevant institutions, and using the surplus could constitute ways to ensure the sustainability of this project. However, the surplus should be used as a contingency and should not be up to a case by case approval of States Signatories, otherwise the sustainability of the project would be in jeopardy. The Group also agrees with the proposal of the PTS regarding the use of a rate of DSA that is tailored to Vienna.

At the end the Group would like to recall that the deficit in the participation of developing countries in WGB meetings was recognized by the PrepCom and expects that this project and its improvement with more participants could contribute to promotion of the participation of the developing countries in all official technical meetings of the PrepCom. In this context the Group recalls the appeal of the PrepCom to the States Signatories to provide voluntary contributions for this project, and invites the Executive Secretary to continue to utilize his good offices to seek contributions from institutional donors as well as States Signatories. The Group also calls upon the PTS to continue exploring other ways and means to ensure the predictability of this project including by establishing a reserve fund.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL DRAFT 2008 PROGRAMME AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

Chairperson,

The Group has expressed its general views regarding the Programme and Budget in general and for 2008 in particular during the previous meetings of Policy Making Organs. However, in light of the current financial situation of the PrepCom, the Group would like to reiterate once again the importance of the following four key elements in any proposed Programme and Budget:

- the current well-advanced status of the verification system,
- the mandate of the PrepCom on the provisional operation of the system,
- the actual prospect of entry into force of the Treaty, and
- the financial burden on States Signatories.

The Group commends the Executive Secretary for implementing austerity measures, reduction of the costs for 2007 and adjusting the Budget for 2008 taking into account the principle of zero real growth. Although such measures may enable the PTS to address the current serious financial situation in the short term, a long term solution would be the need for the PTS to reconsider seriously its programmes based on current realities and the mandate of the PrepCom. The Group highlights that the PrepCom's mandate is the preparation of the verification system on the basis that it would operate provisionally rather than fully. In this context, the Group believes that the use of data for civil and scientific applications, should be in accordance with the mandate of the PrepCom and on the testing and provisional operation of the system and be only limited to available relevant data and stations.

The Group proposes that the PrepCom review and assess the work of the verification system and its costs based on the four key elements as elaborated above and examine the amount of savings that may be obtained if the system works on testing and provisional basis.

With respect to the proposed 2008 Programme and Budget, the Group thanks the Executive Secretary for the adjustments proposed to the initial draft 2008 Programme and Budget. The Group also takes note of the final draft of the 2008 Programme and Budget proposals as contained in document CTBT/.PTS/INF.880/Rev.2 and thanks the PTS for preparing this document. The Group welcomes that the PTS has considered some of the realities in adjusting the 2008 Programme and Budget and hopes this approach would be continued. The Group believes that through an incremental, smooth and balanced approach, the verification regime could be completed.

Chairperson,

Regarding the assessed contributions and current financial situation, the Group reiterates its grave concern about the non-payment by a major contributor of its financial obligations in full to the PrepCom and notes that during the recent years a large amount has not been paid by this major contributor. Such a situation has created a serious challenge to the CTBT verification regime and if it continues would jeopardize the future

of the whole system. In this regard the Group urges this State Signatory to reconsider its political position and selective approach towards the Treaty, and support fully the PrepCom.
Chairperson,

In conclusion, while the Group re-emphasizes the importance of maintaining zero real growth of the budget, in the light of the above mentioned realities and current financial situation, the Group believes that the Programme and Budget should be reviewed for the following years based on the above mentioned realities. In this context the Group expects that the Budget for the coming years should be proposed based on the four mentioned key elements.

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Chairperson,

Concerning the Chairmanship of Working Group A, the G-77 and China commends Mr. Abdulkadir Bin Rimdap for his efficient chairmanship of WGA during the past two years and supports his reappointment. In this regard the Group is concerned about some ideas that the PMOs chairmanship or the recruitment and ordinary extension of the contracts of the staff in the PTS be linked to the payment of assessed contributions or ratification and strongly rejects such ideas.

The Group believes that a balance should be established on the chairmanship of WGA and WGB in which at least one chairmanship be entrusted to developing countries.

Chairperson,

The Group supports in principle the proposed criteria for the selection of the External Auditor. The Group notes that the document was prepared after considering procedures and evaluation criterion applied by several UN organizations. The Group, however, can not accept the establishment of a panel or working group to consider the criteria, as outlined in the document. Regarding the appointment of the next External Auditor for 2009-2010, the Group notes that the previous External Auditors have been selected from the same Group. In this context, the Group believes that every effort should be made to encourage nominating candidates from other regions, in particular from developing countries, and in this regard supports the candidature of South Africa for this position.

AGENDA ITEM 12.1: REQUEST FROM PALESTINE FOR OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE COMMISSION

Chairperson,

The Group recalls the decision of the Commission at its 27th session to place this important issue on the agenda of the 28th Preparatory Commission. The Group regrets that after two years, and four PrepCom meetings, the Preparatory Commission has still not reached a positive decision on this issue only because of the unjustified objection of one State Signatory. In view of the fact that Palestine has been accorded observer status in other United Nations Organizations, the Group is of the view that its request to receive this recognition at the Preparatory Commission should not be treated any differently. The Group also supports the request of Ambassador of Palestine to address this session of the PrepCom on his country's request.

The Group therefore reiterates its strong support for the request by Palestine to be granted observer status within the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and believes that there is no justification for further postponement of this issue and this session of the Preparatory Commission should conclude this issue by granting the observer Status to Palestine.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

At the end, the Group would also like to address some of its other concerns as follows:

The Group reiterates its concern that the overall representation of developing countries in the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) remains unbalanced. It is critical that the PTS continue its efforts to increase the number of staff members from developing countries in the PTS. The Group calls upon the Secretariat to continue to give due attention to this criteria in the recruitment process of new staff members who will replace those who have reached their service limit.

The Group urges the PTS to observe the policy of establishing a seven-year service limit for professional and internationally recruited General Service staff members. The Group reiterates its view that it is important that the seven-year limit is strictly adhered to in spirit and letter. The Group requests the Executive Secretary to continue his efforts to ensure the equitable geographical representation of the staff in the PTS and report on the progress made concerning the staff recruited from developing countries, particularly on the professional level, in comparison to previous years. The Group expresses its concern that some countries are over represented in the PTS and believes that a limitation should be put on the recruitment of staff from each State Signatory.

Thank you Chairperson.