



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE 29TH SESSION (PART II) OF THE WORKING GROUP B OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION (20 AUGUST - 7 SEPTEMBER 2007), DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SAYED GALAL ELDIN ELAMIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me once more express the satisfaction of the State Signatories of the Group of 77 and China in seeing you chairing Part II of the 29th Session of Working Group B of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in 2007. The Group is confident 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 the PTS staff for their work and preparing the related documents.

Method of Work of Working Group B

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China thanks you for preparing the document ECS/DIS/WGB/CHAIR/2 addressing the method of work of Working Group B. The Group takes note of this document and is of the view that this paper could be a sound basis for further discussion during this WGB meeting. In this context, the Group would like to highlight the following;

The Group is of the view that the Chair's paper has addressed some of the concerns raised during the previous meetings. The Group concurs with the Chair that re-examination of method of work should not change the responsibilities of WGB or its relationship with the Commission. As mandated by the PrepCom, the subject of the re-examination is the duration and organization of the meetings of WGB, including the holding of parallel sessions.

The idea of having joint themes on Testing and Provisional Operations, and on Performance Assessment rather than on so many other topics, is an appropriate proposal which could contribute to streamlining the meetings. As proposed, other issues could be absorbed in these two major topics.

With regard to using the Expert Communication System (ECS), the Group believes that ECS could not replace formal meetings for elaboration of the IMS/IDC and OSI operational manuals; however it could be used as a tool to provide information to delegations in advance, as proposed by the Chair. On this issue, the constraints faced by the developing countries accessing the ECS as well as technical problems of the ECS should also be taken into account.

Regarding the main concern of the Group which is the need to reduce the number and duration of the meetings; the proposed schedule for February/March and August/September with no session in May/June and holding no parallel sessions may cover this concern, however since this schedule has excluded the elaboration of the IMS/IDC and OSI Operational Manuals, it needs to be improved. The Group believes that proposals like transferring the Operational Manuals discussions to the workshops or ECS could not be a solution, due to the importance and nature of the discussions. In this regard the Group believes that with streamlining the WGB method of work, the two meetings in two-week blocks could cover all issues including the operational manuals.

Regarding the task of WGB to examine the initial draft Programme and Budget proposals, the Group believes that the idea of a joint WGA/WGB meeting during the first session of WGA of the year could be a constructive solution. To receive more inputs from the technical experts, they could submit their views through the Missions which could be reflected through the Joint meetings accordingly. Since the basis of the verification regime has already been established, the contribution of WGB to this process could be sufficient at this stage and completed in its August-September meeting.

At the end, the Group would like to reiterate that in the re-examination of the organization of Working Group B, a balance on the selection of the Task Leaders and Friends of the Chair in WGB need to be established and more opportunity be given to the developing countries in this regard.

Review of the initial draft 2008 Programme and Budget Proposals

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the draft Budget proposals for 2008, the Group expressed its general views in the previous meetings of Policy Making Organs. However, the Group would like to reiterate its position as follows:

The Group believes that there is a need to review the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and take a realistic and reasonable approach towards the Programme and Budget in general, taking into account the current financial constraints. To avoid future budgetary challenges, we need to review and change our assumptions based on the following realities, as elaborated before:

- 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.

Regarding the current status of the verification system, 10 years after the establishment of the PrepCom, the Group takes note that the advanced phase of the build-up of the verification system is in place. The reaction of the system to the 9 October 2006 event in the DPRK demonstrated this reality very well. Although this is not the end of our goal, nobody can deny that we can rely very much on the current arrangements. There is no doubt that through an incremental and smooth approach, the verification regime could be improved.

On the mandate of the PrepCom, as envisaged in the resolution of the establishment of the PrepCom, the main task of the PrepCom is to establish the verification system as "to operate provisionally as necessary the NDC and the IMS networks, provided for in the Treaty." The Group believes that if the mandate of the PrepCom is fully observed, the heavy burden on the Programme and Budget would be substantially removed. Having the system operating almost in full rather than on provisional status, has put a great financial burden on Signatory States. Since the main part of the Budget is allocated to IMS and IDC operations, and taking into account the current serious financial situation, the Group urges the PTS to review its work based on the very important concept of the "Provisional Operation" and report back to the Policy Making Organs (PMOs) accordingly. The Group believes that this would be the best way of saving on and reducing the costs of the PrepCom.

Regarding the current financial situation, the Group is gravely concerned 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, if it continues, would create a serious challenge to the CTBT verification regime and 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group thanks the Executive Secretary for the adjustments proposed to the initial draft 2008 Programme and Budget as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.905 and takes note of it. The Group notes that the PTS efforts in reallocation and adjustment of the Budget has led to zero real growth in the Budget and believes that this document could be a sound basis for our discussion, in particular during the joint meeting of WGA and B next week.

In conclusion, while the Group re-emphasizes the principle of zero real growth budget, in the light of the above mentioned realities and current financial situation, the Group expects that the Budget for 2008 and for the following years to be substantially reduced.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the development of the Noble Gas Measurement Technique, The Group takes note of the document CTBT/PTS/INF.898 in which the PTS indicated the need for additional resources including for analysts and the current human and financial resources for the development of and contracts for software coding and installation and testing. In this regard, while the Group thanks the PTS for its progress in this field, the Group is of the view that due to the current serious financial situation of the PrepCom the subsequent phases of the project should be postponed.

The Group takes note that 201 international monitoring stations have already been certified and 47 stations are going to be certified. The Group also notes that 20 stations are under construction and the contracts of 15 stations are under negotiation. Due to the financial constraints and above mentioned realities, the Group is of the view that the PTS should postpone the negotiation for contracts, and installation of any new station and focus its activities on certifying the remaining 47 stations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group recalls the decision of the 26th Session Part II of Working Group B that established a set of principles and operating rules for the provision of data related to tsunami warning organizations. In this regard, the Group reiterates its view that available data for tsunami warning purposes shall be provided without prejudice to the objective and purpose of the CTBT, shall not detract from the provisional function and integrity of the IMS, or infringe upon the confidentiality of information, nor add any additional financial burden on States Signatories, especially from developing countries.

The Group believes that the transmission of data should be focussed to the tsunamigenic regions and be limited only to relevant stations. In this regard the PTS should examine the needs of the approved Tsunami Warning Organizations and its their relevance to the intended purpose and inform the WGB and PrepCom respectively. The Group is of the view that there may be a need to review this decision periodically to assess the usefulness of the transmission of such data for tsunami warning purposes including in relation to confidentiality issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group is concerned that as indicated by the PTS the budget for financing the pilot project for participation of experts from developing countries in the technical meetings of the PMOs, in particular WGB meetings, may not be sufficient for 2007. The Group recalls the decision of the PrepCom in its 27th meeting that the PTS report to the PrepCom "shall include also recommendations to the PrepCom on how to improve project performance, including sufficient and sustainable funding". The Group also recalls the appeal of the PrepCom to the States Signatories to provide voluntary contributions for this project, and inviting the Executive Secretary to utilize his good offices to this end. In this regard the Group appreciates the recent financial contribution provided by some States Signatories to this pilot project.

In this context, the Group would like to remind the deficit in the participation of developing countries in

WGB meetings as recognized by the PrepCom and its expectation that the participation of at least 9 experts be financed through this project. Hence, the Group calls on the PTS to work on a feasible proposal for predictable and sustainable funding for this project including creation of a reserve fund to ensure its continuity.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group wishes to thank the PTS for successfully organizing the workshop on CTBT International Cooperation for States of Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Far East from 27-29 June 2007 in Manila, Philippines, in which fifty-five representatives from 17 countries in the SEAPFE region were among the participants, which included Amb. Ana Teresa Dengo, Chairperson of the CTBTO PrepCom. The Group takes note of the announcement of Palau, during the workshop that it has ratified the Treaty. The Group also wishes to thank the Executive Secretary for his subsequent visit to Manila on 9-12 July 2007 and acknowledges for the offer of the PTS to provide data to the National Data Centre (NDC) of the Philippines for the purpose of tsunami warning. The Group also likes to thank the PTS for the joint IMS/IDC Regional Technical Training Course for Station Operators and NDC Technical Staff that was held in Costa Rica from 2-6 July 2007.

The Group takes note of the OSI Integrated Field Exercise, which is to be held in Kazakhstan in 2008, and is aware that the first phase of the training cycle for this exercise was held in Arceuil, France from 2-11 July 2007. While the Group is looking forward to receiving the report of this course, the Group calls the PTS to make every effort to facilitate wider participation of developing countries in this exercise.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.