



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION DELIVERED BY HE AMBASSADOR ANTONIO GUERREIRO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL, 23-26 JUNE 2008

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, let me express the sincere appreciation of the States Signatories of the Group of 77 and China in seeing you chairing the 30th Session of the PrepCom. The Group believes that under your stewardship, our discussions will lead to fruitful conclusions and I assure you of our full cooperation to that end.

The Group takes note that since the last session of the Preparatory Commission in November 2007, the CTBT has been ratified by the Bahamas, Barbados, Malaysia and Colombia, all of which are members of the Group of 77 and China. The ratification by Colombia in particular marks a significant step forward, as Colombia is one of the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT, which must sign and ratify the Treaty before it can enter into force.

The Group thanks the Executive Secretary for his oral and written reports and would like to express its views on the substantive items of the agenda of the present Session of the Preparatory Commission.

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

Mr Chairman,

Regarding Agenda Item 3, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Chairperson of Working Group B, Mr Hein Haak, for presenting the report of its 30th Session and takes note of it.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates its satisfaction with the improvements introduced in the method of work of Working Group B, in particular the elimination of parallel sessions, which have facilitated the participation from all delegations regardless of their size. The Group underlines the need to keep under consideration the issue of the number and duration of WGB meetings, with a view to optimizing their efficiency while reducing the financial burden its attendance imposes on States Signatories. The Group believes, in particular, that such optimization should enable future WGB meeting schedules to be based on two three-week sessions each year.

The Group underscores the positive results achieved thus far by the Pilot Project for financing the participation of technical experts from developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission, and notes with satisfaction that additional resources made available to this project have allowed the support of three additional experts in 2008. The Group expresses its sincere appreciation to all States Signatories which contributed voluntarily to the Pilot Project. The Group of 77 and China also urges States Signatories in a position to do so to provide additional contributions with a view to enabling the Pilot Project to achieve its original goal of supporting the participation of nine experts, and invites the Executive Secretary to continue to utilize his good offices in this regard. The Group also calls upon the PTS to continue exploring other ways and means to ensure the predictability of this project including by, inter alia, the establishment of a reserve fund.

The Group takes note of the information provided by the PTS during the May 30th briefing regarding the status of the preparations for the On-Site Inspection Integrated Field Exercise (IFE), to be held in Kazakhstan in August 2008. The Group believes that the IFE should be regarded as the single major opportunity to test and evaluate procedures for the conduct of on-site inspections prior to the entry into force of the Treaty, and that experience attained thereby should be subject to a thorough, open and transparent

analysis by all States Signatories. While noting the need for the PTS to continue its efforts towards the reinforcement and improvement of its capabilities in the field of OSI, the Group of 77 and China believes that any additional major field exercises, such as a mock inspection, should be held only after the entry into force of the Treaty.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF WORKING GROUP A

Mr Chairman,

Regarding Agenda Item 4, the Group wishes to extend its appreciation to Ambassador Abdulkadir Bin Rimdap, Chairperson of WGA, for presenting the report of its 33rd Session and takes note of it.

As regards the issue of human resources in the PTS, the Group reiterates once again its concerns with the enduring imbalance in the overall representation of developing countries in the PTS Staff. It is critical that the PTS continue its efforts to increase the presence of staff members from developing countries. The Group calls upon the Secretariat to give due attention to this criterion in the recruitment process of new staff members who will replace those who have reached their service limit. In this connection, the Group expresses its concern with the information presented by the PTS during the 33rd Session of WGA as regards the substantial amount of contracts for professional posts which have been renovated at the end of their respective service limits, and reiterates its request for the PTS to strictly observe the service limit policy for Professional and internationally recruited General Service staff members both in spirit and letter. 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 the staff for each of the States Signatories.

The Group is also concerned with the fact that nearly 45% of the consultants or consulting firms hired by the PTS come from only four States Signatories, and that only seven among the 92 contracts for consultant services involve persons or firms from developing countries. The Group therefore requests the Secretariat to take into account the need for further geographical balance in the selection and awarding of contracts for consultant services.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW OF THE ADVISORY GROUP REPORT

Mr Chairman,

The Group takes note of the reports of Parts I and II of the 30th Session of the Advisory Group and expresses its gratitude to Mr André Gué for presenting both documents. The Group has already expressed its detailed views on these reports in the 33rd Session of WGA.

AGENDA ITEM 6: REVIEW OF THE INITIAL DRAFT 2009 PROGRAMME AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

Mr Chairman,

As for the review of the initial draft 2009 Programme and Budget Proposals, the Group of 77 and China recalls its statements to the Joint Session of WGA and WGB on May 30 and to the 33rd Session of WGA, in which the Group has already expressed its positions on the issue.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates, in particular, its utmost concern with the fact that the estimates presented by the Secretariat as regards the overall expenditure levels for 2009 are not based on a zero real growth scenario, in contradiction with the long standing position of the Group.

Although the draft document describes the proposed growth of 1.8% in real terms as "modest", the Group underscores that, due to the effects of the downward trend in the dollar/euro exchange rate, its impact would be severely magnified in the case of States Signatories which use dollars to pay their assessed contributions.

The Group requests that for the sake of transparency and comparability, information in this regard is included in the next version of the budget proposal, in line with the practice followed in previous budget cycles.

The Group also notes that the initial draft presupposes a substantial increase in the relative percentage of the euro portion vis-à-vis the dollar portion of the budget, by means of an increase of €2 208 700 in the former and a reduction of US\$806 100 in the latter in comparison with the respective 2008 levels, and requests further clarification and justification in this regard.

In view of the above, the Group has requested the Secretariat to revise the draft proposal in the light of the key elements that underpin its position in this regard, namely:

- The current well-advanced status of the verification system,
- The mandate of the PrepCom on the provisional operation of the system,
- The actual prospects of entry into force of the Treaty, and
- The need to minimize the financial burden to be borne by States Signatories.

In addition to these elements, which were elaborated by the Group of 77 and China in its intervention at the last Joint Session of Working Groups A and B in February, the preparation of the revised proposal should seek to identify all possible savings and to eliminate unnecessary increases in the current levels of expenditure.

As regards the Medium Term Plan, the Group wishes to recall its positions on the issue, which were already presented in detail in its statements during the last meetings of WGA and WGB. The Group of 77 and China would like to stress the need for greater participation by States Signatories in the elaboration of future versions of the Medium Term Plan.

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

As regards agenda item 7.1, on the appointments to the Advisory Group, the Group of 77 and China expresses its support to all four nominees presented by States Signatories for consideration by the current session of the PrepCom, and notes with appreciation that two of these nominees have been presented by members of the Group.

As to agenda item 7.2, on the issue of the selection of the External Auditor for the period 2009-2010, the Group is pleased to note that candidates from developing States Signatories have been presented. Bearing in mind that the current External Auditor of the PrepCom has come from one developed State Signatory, and has been the external auditor since the establishment of the PrepCom, the Group reiterates its position that the next External Auditor should be selected from among the aforementioned candidacies of developing States Signatories.

The Group is confident that through the good offices and consultations to be conducted by the Chairperson, the selection of the next External Auditor will unfold in a transparent and inclusive manner towards a consensus solution. The Group notes, however, that the proposal to invite all candidates to perform oral presentations to the PrepCom would impose an additional burden on all candidates, especially those from developing States. The Group is willing to consider alternative procedures, such as requesting the candidates to submit videotaped statements to the PrepCom or holding a videoconferencing session with candidates. The Group also suggests that any questions that States Signatories may have regarding the proposals could be presented in the form of a questionnaire, to be answered in writing by candidates in a predefined time frame.

AGENDA ITEM 10.1: REQUEST FROM PALESTINE FOR OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE COMMISSION

Mr Chairman,

As regards the request from Palestine for observer status with the Commission, the Group regrets that after two and a half years, and five 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. Bearing in mind 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 therefore reiterates its strong support for the legitimate request by Palestine to be granted observer status within the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, in a manner consistent with achieving the universality of the Treaty.

While expressing its support to the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on this agenda item, the Group of 77 and China expects that consensus can be reached on the proposal for the PrepCom to invite the Ambassador of Palestine to address the Commission and present its position on this matter.