



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRY-SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION DELIVERED BY MS. MARIA DE LOS MILAGROS DONNA RABALLO, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, ON BEHALF OF H.E. AMBASSADOR EUGENIO MARIA CURIA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA, 8-9 JUNE 2009

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me express the satisfaction of the State Signatories of the Group of 77 and China in seeing you chairing the 32nd session of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. The Group believes that under your stewardship, discussions will lead to fruitful conclusions and I assure you of our full cooperation.

The Group of 77 and China notes that since the last Session of the PrepCom in November 2008, further progress has been made towards bringing the CTBT to its much-desired universal status, with the ratification by Lebanon and Malawi, thus elevating the number of ratifying States to 148, within a total number of 180 States Signatories.

The Group thanks the Executive Secretary Mr. Tibor Tóth 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 the issue of the method of work of Working Group B, the Group of 77 and China once again reiterates its position that the annual programme of work of WGB can be carried out in two sessions per year, with duration of three weeks each. The Group recalls that recent experience has demonstrated that WGB can adequately fulfill its responsibilities within this time frame.

The Group takes note of the report of the 32nd Session of Working Group B, the Group wishes to recall its concerns with the imbalance between the three main dimensions of the verification system, namely the IMS, the IDC and OSI, due to the excessive focus on station building. The PTS should continue to seek efficiencies across Major Programmes, taking into account the balance among them.

Regarding the report of extraordinary session of WGB on evaluation of the 2008 on-site inspection (OSI) Integrated Field Exercise (IFE), the Group of 77 and China would like to once again thank the PTS for preparation and successful conclusion of the 2008 Integrated Field Exercise that was conducted last September in Kazakhstan. The Group also would like to thank the PTS for conducting follow-up activities on the evaluation of the lessons learned from the IFE08. The group is in the view that this major activity significantly will contribute in enhancing the PTS capability in the preparation of OSI Regime and its results and lessons learned should be subject to due considerations by PMOs, the Group believes that any possible set of recommendations to be derived from the experience attained in IFE08 should be structured in order of priority, taking into account cost and sustainability considerations, as well as the prospects for entry into force of the Treaty.

Regarding the implementation of the pilot project for financing the participation of technical experts from developing countries in WGB meetings, the Group takes note of the selection of five additional technical experts under this pilot project in 2009, thus increasing the number of experts to nine. The Group seizes this

opportunity to thank the PTS for their efforts as well as states signatories and OPEC fund for their voluntary contribution in financing this project.

Agenda Item 4 and 5: Consideration of the report of Working Group A and Advisory Group

Mr. Chairman,

As regards the reports of the 35th session of WGA and part one and two of the 32nd session of the Advisory Group, the Group takes note of all recommendations contained therein.

Regarding the latest revised proposal for supplementary appropriations for the two components of the Capital Investment Fund, as contained in CTBT/PTS/INF.1004/Rev.4, the Group reiterates its view that the proposal should be treated as a potential supplementary funding mechanism and not as an alternative for increases in the regular budget.

The Group takes note with interest that the revised version also allocates funds for the CIF-S and not only for the CIF-I as originally proposed. The Group underscores that the funds to be obtained by this mechanism for the CIF-S should allow the Commission to reduce, by the same level, the appropriations for this sub-fund from the 2011 and 2012 regular budgets.

On the other hand, the Group notes that the installation plan on which the original proposal was based remains unchanged in the revised version. The Group reiterates its call for prudence in the installation efforts, especially in light of the current perspectives for entry into force of the Treaty and of the priorities set forth by Working Group B for the IMS. The Group would furthermore appreciate if the PTS could clarify how could a sizable portion of the amount initially sought for the CIF-I be reallocated to the CIF-S without adjusting the original installation plan.

Agenda Item 6: Consideration of the initial draft 2010 Programme and Budget

Mr. Chairman,

The Group has expressed its general views regarding the Initial Draft Programme and Budget for 2010 during the previous meetings of the Policy Making Organs. At this occasion, the Group would like to reiterate once again the importance of the following four key elements that must be taken into account in all budgetary cycles of the PrepCom:

- 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 Initial Draft Programme and Budget for 2010, the Group recalls its position as expressed in its statement to the 32nd Session of Working Group B and 35th session of WGA, in which the Group indicated that the preparation of the Draft Programme and budget for 2010 should be once again based on a target of zero real growth as a ceiling for the overall expenditures, without precluding the possibility of identifying possible reductions and savings. In this context we note the recent proposal of the PTS for a 2010 budget proposal. However, we recall our previous statement in which we emphasized the need to identify reductions and savings and look forward to the proposals from the secretariat in this regard that could facilitate the adoption of the budget.

The Group is encouraged that recent events have proven the ability of the Treaty's verification regime to fulfill the mandate of the Preparatory Commission, especially related to the functioning of the international monitoring system and the processing of data through the International Data Centre and the subsequent release of reporting products.

There are divergent views on the timing of the completion of the verification regime. Regarding this matter, the Group believes that our obligation remains to ensure that the regime shall be capable of meeting its verification requirements at, and not before, entry into force of the Treaty. It is therefore not necessary to adjust the draft 2010 budget proposal to allow for the accelerated completion of this regime before entry into force of the Treaty.

Agenda Item 7: Appointments and elections

Mr. Chairman,

As regards agenda item 7.1, the Group would like to express its appreciation for the competence and diplomatic skills demonstrated by Mr. André Gué in discharge of his duties, since his appointment as Chairperson of Advisory Group, and hopes that the Advisory Group will benefit from his valuable experience and expertise as a member of AG.

Regarding the appointment of the next chairperson of the Advisory Group, the Group is looking forward to receive the information on the candidates for this position and hopes that consensus be achieved in this regard in the current session.

Agenda Item 10.1: Request from Palestine for observer status with the Commission

Mr. Chairman,

With regards to the request from Palestine for observer status with the Commission, the Group regrets that after three years, and six Sessions of the PrepCom, the Commission has still not reached a positive decision on this issue, only because of the 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 the goal of achieving the objectives and the universality of the Treaty.

I thank you Mr. Chairman