



VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 32ND SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B (WGB) OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION (9-27 FEBRUARY 2009) DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR EUGENIO MARIA CURIA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, on behalf of the States Signatories of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Hein Haak, on your reappointment as Chairman of Working Group "B" of the PrepCom-CTBTO for a further period of three years. The Group is certain that under your experienced leadership WGB will continue to work in an evermore effective and efficient manner, and I assure you of our full cooperation in that respect.

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.

As regards the issue of the programme of work of Working Group B, the Group of 77 and China recalls that recent experience has demonstrated that WGB can fulfill adequately its responsibilities by means of two sessions per year, with a duration of three weeks each. In this context, Mr. Chairman, we also commend your efforts towards rationalizing and streamlining the methods of work of WGB, which we expect to continue in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to the issue of the Pilot Project for financing the participation of technical experts from developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission, the Group reiterates its sincere appreciation to all States Signatories which have been contributing voluntarily to this important initiative. The Group regrets, however, that the funds received as of this moment only enabled the Secretariat to maintain the number of supported experts attained last year. In this regard, we call upon all other 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 as soon as possible, and we encourage the Executive Secretary to continue to exert his good offices towards this objective.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Executive Secretary for the latest written report on the activities of the PTS covering the period October and December 2008, as contained in document CTBT/PC-32/INF.1, as well as for the oral report delivered during the present session of WGB. The Group notes in particular that, according to the report, the total number of certified international monitoring stations has risen to 235 and an additional 29 are completed and awaiting certification as of the end of the reporting period. The Group underscores that this means that nearly three-quarters of the IMS stations are already fully operational.

The Group wishes to reiterate its concerns with the imbalance between the three main dimensions of the verification system, namely the IMS, the IDC and OSI. As a consequence of an excessive focus on station building, it is clear that the capabilities of the IDC have been severely outpaced by the enormous increases

in the volume of data generated by an ever-growing IMS. At the same time, the Group recalls the need to avoid the medium and long-term budgetary implications of increasing the number of installed and certified stations without due regard to concrete prospects for entry into force of the Treaty.

By the same token, the Group expresses its concern with the affirmation contained in paragraph 37 of the Report, which states that the delays in the delivery of IDC reviewed products are the result of the policy on limitation of tenure. The Group recalls that the seven-year tenure limitation policy is not an unexpected occurrence, but instead a standing regulation that should be taken into account in the long-term strategic human resources planning of all areas of the PTS. Laying the responsibility for the delays experienced by the IDC division on the tenure policy would be tantamount to blaming the limitations imposed by the 8-hour working day or by the 5-day working week.

It is the perception of the Group that root causes of the problem can only be attributed to chronic understaffing in the IDC division, which serves as a demonstration of the aforementioned imbalances between the branches of the verification regime. The Group believes, in principle, that a long-term solution depends on endowing the IDC Division with adequate manpower, taking into account not only its day-to-day responsibilities and possible temporary overloads, but also the expected staff turnover and the need to develop further its processing and analytical capabilities. Such increase in staff could be achieved within current budgetary levels, through, for example, reallocating to the IDC Division part of the resources earmarked to fund further expansions of the IMS.

Turning now to the issue of relations with other International Organizations, the Group also notes that, according to paragraph 101 of the Report, PTS representatives took part in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland, in order to discuss "the potential role and contribution of the IMS in the development of a coordinated approach to the challenges of climate change". While reiterating the need for a strict adherence to the mandate of the Commission and to the objectives of the Treaty and of its verification regime, the Group requests detailed information on what such purported potential role might be.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards the guidance to be provided to the PTS for preparing the verification related work programme and budget for 2010, the Group believes that the following four key elements should be taken into account in the current and future budgetary cycles of the PrepCom:

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

As a corollary to these principles, the Group believes 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. These efforts become all the more crucial in the context of the current outlook of widespread economic hardship, which affects, in varying degrees, the entire membership of the Treaty.

In addition, as previously elaborated by the Group, the preparation of the verification related work programme for 2010 and future years should take into account the need to ensure balance in all areas of the verification regime, and to avoid focusing excessively on station-building.

On the issue of On-Site inspection, and in particular as regards the Integrated Field Exercise held last year in Kazakhstan (IFE08), the Group of 77 and China congratulates once again the Secretariat for its successful completion. The Group also appreciates the cooperation offered by Kazakhstan, as the host country, and the financial and in-kind contributions made by several States Signatories. The Group has received the report of the 15th OSI Workshop held in Baden last December, and looks forward to analysing the draft IFE

evaluation report. As preliminary comments on the results of the Exercise, the Group believes it has been a valuable opportunity to test and further develop the procedures and capabilities of the PTS in the field of OSI.

On the other hand, however, the Group expresses its concern with the imbalanced composition of the Inspection Team (IT), which was comprised of experts from a limited number of States Signatories. As regards the role of observers to the IFE08, the Group believes that the strict limitations set on their activities may have prevented them from acquiring a first-hand impression of the conduct of the exercise. The Group believes that a set of guidelines on the role of observers will be useful in possible future exercises.

The Group suggests 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. In addition, the Group would appreciate if all documentation related to the exercise, including video footage, is made available to States Signatories.

The Group also reiterates that future steps in the field of OSI, particularly as regards the next exercise cycle, should be fully discussed by all policy-making organs of the PrepCom, and that any concrete actions to that effect by the PTS must be based on a prior and specific mandate. 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 a mock inspection should be held only after the Entry Into Force of the Treaty.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, concerning the proposal presented by you during the 30th Session of WGB, as to the possibility of conducting validation tests for the verification system, the Group is still awaiting further details regarding its technical details and overall financial implications, and reserves the right to issue substantive comments at a later stage and on the basis of such clarifications.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.