



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 34TH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B (WGB) OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION, 15 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH 2010, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR TAOUS FEROUKHI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, on behalf of the States Signatories of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express our satisfaction in seeing you, chairing this Thirty-Fourth Session of Working Group B. The Group wishes to assure you of our full cooperation.

Before addressing the substantive matters of the Agenda for this Session, the Group wishes to express its grief for the recent passing of the Director of the OSI Division, Mr Boris Kvok and to extend our sympathy to his family and colleagues. The Group wishes to pay tribute to this distinguished diplomat as an international civil servant. This sudden and premature loss has been deeply felt by the whole CTBTO community.

The Group of 77 and China notes that since the Thirty-Third Session of the WGB (17 August - 4 September 2009), further progress has been made towards bringing the CTBT to its much desired universal status with the signing of the Treaty by Trinidad and Tobago on 9 October 2009, which brings the total number of States Signatories to 182, and with the ratification by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and by the Marshall Islands, thus bringing the number of ratifications to a total of 151.

As regards the issue of the programme of work of Working Group B, the Group of 77 and China would like to recall the agreement reached in the last Working Group B concerning the number of its regular sessions programmed for 2010. The Group believes that the experience in the last two years has shown that through further streamlining, the annual programme of work of WGB can be carried out in two sessions per year, without the need for additional sessions.

The Group takes note of the report for 2009 contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1043 on the status of implementation of the pilot project. The Group fully supports the continuation of this project and calls for sufficient and sustainable funding and a more transparent process for the selection of experts. The Group would like to emphasize however, the need to observe equitable geographic distribution in the selection process for participation in the pilot project.

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Executive Secretary for the latest written report on the activities of the PTS for the period October to December 2009, as contained in document CTBT/ES/2009/6, 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 is now 244 and the total number of certified radionuclide laboratories is 10. As of 31 December 2009, 268 stations have been completed or certified, representing 83 per cent of the IMS network. Likewise, 24 out of 40 noble gas systems have been installed as of this date.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates the need to maintain an adequate balance in the prioritization and distribution of resources across the three main dimensions of the verification system, namely the IMS, the

IDC and OSI. In this regard, the Group encourages the PTS to continue to seek efficiencies and to revisit the prioritization across Major Programmes in order to achieve this balance.

Turning now to the operations and maintenance of the IMS, the Group of 77 and China is concerned with the increasing levels of post-certification activity (PCA) costs. We take note that the PCA expenditure during 2009 totalled US\$15 800 000. In this regard, while recalling the direct relationship between the increase in the number of certified stations and the growth in PCA costs, the Group reiterates the need to continue pursuing further measures to manage PCA costs and to ensure that the efforts to build up the IMS are sustainable, taking into account current budgetary constraints and the prospects for entry into force of the Treaty.

Regarding the OSI, the Group would like to thank the PTS for having developed the action plan as a final product of the IFE review and its follow-up process. Bearing in mind that the plan is supposed to set out a strategic framework for the development of the OSI regime, the group is of the view that the programmes and projects to develop the OSI should be guided by order of priority, taking into account cost and sustainability considerations, as well as the prospects for entry into force of the Treaty;

In this regard, the Group once again emphasizes the importance of arriving as a matter of urgency at a definition of the level of 'OSI readiness' to be achieved prior to the Treaty's entry into force, which must be fully developed and agreed by the PMOs, with a view to achieving much needed guidance for the long term planning of activities in the field of OSI. The Group therefore proposes that WGB tasks the PTS to prepare a baseline proposal on the definition of OSI readiness for discussion at the next session of WGB.

The Group also reiterates that the OSI action plan should not predetermine nor prejudice the normal process of priority setting and resource allocation in the context of the annual budgetary discussions.

Regarding the five key project areas for OSI development that have been identified based on the clustering of lessons learned from the IFE08 it is necessary that the numerous components of the project areas of the proposed action plan be presented more clearly according to timetables and their corresponding budgetary implications.

The Group also believes that a high priority must be attached to ensuring the widest possible participation of all States Signatories, and in particular developing States, in the second OSI training cycle, especially as regards the composition of the surrogate inspection team to take part in the next integrated field exercise. While recognizing that this can only be achieved by means of joint efforts by the PTS and States Signatories themselves, the Group points out that OSI training activities could be adapted in order to increase the opportunities for technical experts to familiarize themselves with the OSI regime.

The Group further believes that the next planning cycle should be based on the objective of organizing an integrated field exercise at the end of a period of three to four years, where achieving cost effectiveness and system efficiencies should be a principal consideration in defining the elements and magnitude of such exercise.

Regarding the proposal for the establishment of an Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF), the Group takes note of the briefing provided by the late Mr Kvok on 3 February 2010. In this respect, the Group is of the view that the option considered as the most suitable to the pressing needs of the Division is the renting of a preexisting facility. The costs of doing so could be easily absorbed within current budgetary levels.

As regards the guidance to be provided to the PTS for preparing the verification related work programme and budget for 2011, the Group reiterates 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;
- The actual prospects for entry into force of the Treaty.

The Group believes that the preparation of the draft Programme and Budget for 2011 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 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.

Finally the Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize the importance it attaches to the capacity building and training programme as a means to improve the ability of States Signatories to participate fully in the verification regime and also in the PTS related activities. In this regard the Group appreciates the continuing efforts by the PTS in this field, and encourages the PTS to ensure the widest possible participation of developing countries in the PTS capacity building and training programmes.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.