



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 33RD SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B (WGB) OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION (17 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2009) DELIVERED BY MS. MARÍA DE LOS MILAGROS DONNA RABALLO, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA

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, Mr. Hein Haak, chairing the Working Group B in its 33rd Session. The Group is confident that under your guidance, WGB will continue to work in an effective and efficient manner, and I assure you of our cooperation in this respect.

The Group of 77 and China notes that since the last Session of the PrepCom on 8-9 June, further progress has been made towards bringing the CTBT to its much-desired universal status with the signing of the Treaty by St. Vincent and the Grenadines in New York on 2 July, which brings the total number of States Signatories to 181 and the Republic of the Republic of Liberia, which ratified the Treaty on 17 August 2009, bringing the ratifications to a total of 149.

As regards the issue of the programme of work of Working Group B, the Group of 77 and China strongly supports the efforts aiming at rationalizing and streamlining the methods of work of WGB. The Group maintains the view that WGB can fulfill adequately its responsibilities within a calendar of two sessions per year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China is pleased that the Pilot Project has facilitated the participation of five (5) more experts from developing countries in the technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission this year. This brings to nine (9) the total number of technical experts from developing countries participating in the meetings. The Group conveys its appreciation to States Signatories and the OPEC Fund whose voluntary contributions have made this possible. The Group would like to emphasize however, the need to observe equitable geographic distribution in the selection process for participation in the pilot project.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Executive Secretary for the latest written report on the verification-related activities of the PTS covering the period May-July 2009, as contained in document CTBT/ES-2009/2, as well as for the oral report delivered during this session.

The Group notes in particular that the total number of certified international monitoring stations is now 238 and the total number of certified radionucleid laboratories is 10. As of 31 July 2009, 266 stations have been completed or certified, representing 83 per cent of the IMS network. Likewise, 23 noble gas systems have been installed as of this date.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates its previous concerns on the imbalance in the attention given to the three main dimensions of the verification system, namely the IMS, the IDC and OSI, due to an excessive focus on station-building. In this regard, the Group has asked PTS to continue to seek efficiencies across Major Programmes to achieve this desired balance.

In this context, the Group takes note of document CTBT/PTS/INF.1000/Rev.1 dated 5 August 2009 showing certain adjustments in the 2010 regular budget in comparison to the 2009 budget that respond to the Group's concerns on the need to balance the three major verification-related programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to the operations and maintenance of the IMS, the Group of 77 and China is concerned with the continuing high levels of Post Certification Activity (PCA) costs. We noted in CTBT/PTS/INF.1000 that PCA cost levels have been managed mainly because of contributions in-kind and national funding by host states. In this regard, we urge WGB to prioritize discussions on sustainable measures to manage PCA costs.

Regarding the IDC, the Group supports the significant attention given by the PTS to measures relating to station performance/reliability and data availability, quality and timeliness, a matter identified by policy-making organs to be significant priority. The steady expansion of the IMS has given rise to an unprecedented level of the volume of data processed by the IDC and demands on PTS' human resources. In the 32nd Session of the WGB, the Group of 77 and China called for sustainable, long-term solutions to address this situation such as the increase of staff complement of the IDC Division and redirecting funds from other Major Programmes for this purpose, if necessary. The Group is reassured that in his Report CTBT/ES/2009/2, the Executive Secretary noted that the migration of the IDC automatic processing system to Linux-based servers would relieve the pressure on human resources. The Group also noted with interest, steps that the PTS has taken related to the operation of GCI and networks and the adoption of software applications with immediate and strategic relevance to the provisional verification system.

The Group believes that, considering the need to first consolidate the full functionality of the IDC proper, as well as the mandate for provisional operation of the IDC prior to the Entry Into Force, the establishment of a so called warm standby" back-up IDC is quite premature at this stage.

Regarding the OSI, the Group of 77 and China has taken note of the document CTBT/PTS/INF.1020 and thanks the OSI Division for the informal briefing on 31 July 2009 to present this document which aims to serve as a "road map" for the development of the OSI regime. While reserving our right to express our more detailed views and positions regarding the contents of this document in the future, the Group would like to make the following preliminary comments:

- The approach and projects to develop the OSI should be guided by the outcomes of the exhaustive process of review and evaluation of the IFE '08 which have been 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 the planning, implementation and review of any field exercises due attention should be given to the criteria of equitable geographical distribution in selecting experts and surrogate inspectors ;
- 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 paramount consideration in defining the elements and magnitude of such exercise; and,
- The Group of 77 and China also recalls its request for a comprehensive cost estimate on the establishment of an equipment, storage and maintenance facility, as well as on possible alternatives being considered by the Secretariat in order to minimize the financial implications on this proposal, especially as regards potential contributions in kind and modalities for cooperation with the host State;
- While noting the need for the PTS to pursue its mandate to develop capabilities in the field of OSI, the Group stresses that a mock inspection should only be held after the Entry Into Force of the Treaty.
- It is important that any possible definition of the level of "OSI readiness" to be achieved prior to the Treaty's entry into force has to be fully developed and agreed by the PMOs;
- The Group also underscores that the action plan should not represent any prejudice to the normal process of priority setting and resource allocation in the context of the annual budgetary discussions.

The Group has taken note that as a result of the evaluation process of the IFE '08, five key project areas for

OSI development have been identified based on the clustering of lessons learned from the exercise. The Group finds it 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China has been emphasizing consistently that the following four key elements should be taken into account in the current and future budgetary cycles of the PrepCom with reference to the verification-related activities of the PTS:

- 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.

The Group has taken note of CTBT/PTS/INF.1017, and adjustments made to the 2010 Programme and Budget Proposals. The revised proposal, being within zero real growth level compared to the 2009 budget, is a sound basis for considering the 2010 Programme and Budget, without precluding the possibility of identifying further reductions and savings, as well as efficiency measures. This pragmatic approach becomes all the more necessary as the effects of global recession loom larger, affecting in varying degrees the entire membership of the PrepCom.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to capacity-building and training, the Group of 77 and China appreciates the continuing efforts by the PTS to enhance the capability of all States to participate fully in the verification system, and encourages the PTS to ensure the widest possible participation of developing countries in the PTS capacity-building and training programmes. We note the recent NDC capacity-building and training workshops held in Tanzania, Dominican Republic and Mexico, and in this regard encourage similar endeavors to be undertaken in an equitable manner.

The Group also notes that with the conclusion of a new agreement between the PTS and the Thai Meteorological Department concerning the use of primary seismic, auxiliary seismic and hydro acoustic available data for tsunami warning purposes, the number of agreements between the PTS and States Signatories of this nature is now seven. The Group reiterates its view that the provision of available data for tsunami warning purposes shall be without prejudice to the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, shall not detract from the provisional function and integrity of the IMS, or infringe upon the confidentiality of information, nor add any financial burden on States Signatories.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.