



VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP A, 5 - 9 OCTOBER 2009 DELIVERED BY HE AMBASSADOR EUGENIO MARIA CURIA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me express on behalf of the States Signatories of the G77 and China our satisfaction in seeing you, Ambassador Rimdap, chairing Working Group A at its thirty-sixth session.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me to express our deepest condolences to the people and government of Indonesia for the loss of many lives and properties due to the devastating earthquake.

The Group would also wish to express our sympathy and profound sentiments of sadness to the people and government of Samoa for the tragic loss of lives and properties caused by the recent tsunami.

The Group would also like to thank the Executive Secretary, Ambassador Tibor Toth for the update on the non-verification related activities of the PTS for the period May to August 2009, as contained in document CTBT/ES/2009/3, as well as his oral remarks in the opening session of the current Session.

The Group notes the further progress that has been made towards bringing the CTBT to its much-desired universal status with the latest signature and ratification of the Treaty by St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Chairman,

As regard to item 2 of the agenda, on the Non-verification related activities of the PTS, the Group takes note of the Chief of Internal Audit's commencement of duties and re-affirms its commitment and support to her during the execution of her duties. The Group is encouraged to note that a review of the internal oversight mechanisms, comparing these against best practices with other United Nations organizations was initiated and requests the PTS to keep States Signatories apprised of the results of the consultancy work on the feasibility study on the possible transition to IPSAS. The Group would appreciate, in particular, that the results of this study include a detailed outline of the expected benefits and efficiency gains to be derived from the transition to IPSAS and the adoption of a new ERP.

The Group 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 however would like to recall its position on this issue as expressed in the statement of Working Group B in its thirty-third Session and reiterates the need to observe equitable geographic distribution in the selection process for participation in the pilot project.

The Group notes that as of 2 September 2009, the collection of assessed contribution for 2009 amounted to 69, 9% of the US dollar portion and 51, 7% of the Euro portion. On the same in 2008, the collection rates were 61, 0% of the US dollar portion and 57, 4% of the Euro portion. The Group welcomes the payment of a large portion of outstanding arrears by some States Signatories throughout the year and in particular the recent payment made by Brazil.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to Agenda Item 3, on the Advisory Group recommendations, the Group would like to congratulate the new Chair of the AG, Sir Michael Weston, for the assumption of his new duties, and to thank him for introducing the Report of the 33rd Session of the AG. The Group believes that this report demonstrates once more the usefulness of the AG as a source of expert analysis and advice on the basis of a broad array of background and expertise. In this regard the Group endorses and supports all recommendations issued by the AG, with the following observations.

The Group shares, in particular, the various concerns and observations expressed by the AG regarding the use of Consultants and GTAs for tasks typical of regular staff, and the need for full transparency and justification in their recruitment and use. In this regard, the Group requests the Secretariat to ensure that the regular reports on the personnel situation henceforth include comprehensive information on consultants and GTAs, including job description, length of contract and nationality.

As to the discussions held by the AG on the Revised Draft Programme and Budget for 2010, the Group notes the explanation provided to the AG as regards the intention to exclude the proposed item of expenditure "General Assistance - Professional" from the Final Draft Budget. The Group nevertheless underscores that the practice of using consultants for tasks that should be undertaken by regular staff is inadequate and should be phased out.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards item 4 of the agenda, on Accounts of the Preparatory Commission for 2008, as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.998, the Group takes note of the "letter of comfort" of the External Auditor on the Provident Fund (CTBT/PTS/INF. 1027) stating the External Auditor's satisfaction with the accuracy of payments to the Provident Fund.

Turning now to item 5 of the agenda, namely the Final Draft Programme and Budget for 2010 as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1000/Rev.1 the Group has on many occasions stated that the revised budget proposal as well as future budgets need to be within the frame of zero real growth and the PTS should continue to explore any further reductions, savings and efficiency measures.

The Group has consistently emphasized that the following 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, namely;

- 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.

In addition to these comments, Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China also recalls and reaffirms its comments on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010 in its statement to the last Joint Meeting of Working Groups A and B.

Whilst taking cognizance of the inclusion of Working Groups A and B recommendations on document CTBT/PTS/INF.1017 the Group is concerned that instead of exploring all possible avenues to ensure the required level of qualified human resources within the Organisation, the PTS has reverted back to the funding of consultants which poses a challenge to containing staff cost increases and does not address the shortage of qualified human resources in the long term. The Group also recalls that, as previously stated, it is open to consider alternatives that would enable the PTS to have greater flexibility to address its staff needs, as long as such alternatives include provisions to ensure transparency, in particular as regards the selection criteria and geographical distribution.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards item 6.1 of the agenda, on the proposed 2009 budgetary transfers, the Group is concerned by the proposal to transfer US\$ 2 700 000 from the PCA budget to the CIF, in order to fund unforeseen additional installation costs of IMS Stations. The Group underscores, in particular, that the proposal would mean that nearly 3% of the overall budget would be shifted to the CIF-I. In principle, the Group believes that the tendency to fund certain items, in particular the CIF, through mechanisms extraneous to the normal budgeting process undermines the transparency and credibility of the regular budget as a guide for resource distribution based on the priorities set by the Policy Making Organs. More specifically, the Group underlines that, in view of the excessive number of stations whose installation or maintenance work will require more resources than originally budgeted, additional justification should be provided by the Secretariat as to the unforeseen circumstances that caused such increases.

Pertaining to the mechanism to manage the PCA cost, the Group would like to thank the PTS for its clarification on this matter (CTBT/PTS/INF.1011/Rev.1). However, the group is still concerned that some of the proposed measures aimed at lowering the costs for PCAs could instead lead to an increase in these costs.

The Group believes that the proposed standardization of PCA contracts is positive in principle, but it recalls that the standardization of PCA contracts should not prevent the PTS and station operators from addressing specific factors that may influence their respective operation.

Turning to item 8 of the agenda, pertaining to the status of on-site inspection, inspectors and inspection assistants the Group thanks the PTS for the document contained in CTBT/PTS/INF.1036, status of OSI Inspectors and Inspection assistants. The Group takes note of the fact that the PTS has taken into account the lessons learned during the planning preparation and conduct of the 2008 Integrated Field Exercise.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards item 11 on the agenda, the schedule of sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in 2010, the Group believes that experience in the last two years has shown that through further streamlining, the annual program of work of WGB can be carried out in two sessions per year, without the need for additional sessions. While recalling the agreement to that effect reached at the last Session of Working Group B, the Group further believes that the joint working group A and B meeting proposed for 31 May 2010 should be held in conjunction with the scheduled Working Group A meeting during June 2010.

The Group is of the view that the dates of the 35th Session of the Advisory Group should be held 6-9 September 2010 instead of the proposed dates of 13-17 September 2010 in order to avoid overlap between sessions of the AG and meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Group will continue to work constructively to find a consensus decision on the schedule of meetings for 2010.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.