



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B, 14 FEBRUARY - 4 MARCH 2011 DELIVERED BY HE AMBASSADOR ALI ASGHAR SOLTANIEH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IR OF IRAN

Mr Chairman,

1. On behalf of the States Signatories of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express the satisfaction of the Group in seeing you chairing the Thirty-Sixth Session of Working Group B. The Group is confident that, under your guidance and with the assistance of the Task Leaders, Working Group B will fulfill its task in an effective and efficient manner.

2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Executive Secretary for the report he conveyed orally at the current session and for the information contained therein, and would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the timely and professional manner in which it has conducted its work in preparation for this session. Mr Chairman,

3. Regarding the programme of work of the Preparatory Commission and its subsidiary bodies for 2011, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the decision adopted by the Preparatory Commission at its Thirty-Fifth Session, as contained in document CTBT/PC-35/2/Annex II, dated 17 November 2010. As far as Working Group B is concerned, the Group of 77 and China is of the opinion that, through further streamlining of its activities, an efficient use of the time at its disposal and a productive intersessional work conducted via discussions and exchange of opinions on the Experts Communication System (ECS), its annual programme of work can be carried out in two three-week sessions per year, without the need for additional sessions.

4. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China supports all efforts aimed at rationalizing and optimizing the methods of work of Working Group B and, more specifically, it welcomes the discussion that you, Mr Chairman, launched on the ECS in October 2010, inviting for comments, suggestions and ideas. It is in this context that the Group of 77 and China would like to recall the fact that, in its statement at the Thirty-Fifth Session of Working Group B, it had suggested the use of videoconferences as a means of interactive involvement, a technological tool that is already in use in other international organizations and that could widen the scope of participation of experts - especially from developing countries -, thus enriching the work conducted within the CTBTO regime.

5. Having said this, the Group of 77 and China would like to convey its intention of engaging in a frank and constructive discussion insofar as this is not misconstrued as a revision of its position as far as the number of sessions assigned to Working Group B and their duration are concerned. Indeed, the Group of 77 and China encourages deliberations on possible ways of improving the methodology of work of Working Group B, but always within the framework of the position sustained by the Group of 77 and China in respect of the number of sessions and their duration.

6. The Group of 77 and China reiterates the position expressed in its statement at the Thirty-Fifth session of the Preparatory Commission (CTBT/PC-35/NAT.1, dated 9 November 2010). We believe that experience in the past two years has proven that, through further streamlining in terms of efficiency, holding no more than two regular sessions, with a duration of three weeks each, allows for proper and effective consideration of issues currently on the agenda of Working Group B, while at the same time avoiding excessive burdens for States Signatories, especially developing ones, in terms of attendance of meetings by experts from capitals.

7. In this latter regard, and bearing in mind the importance given by the Group of 77 and China to making

progress on the draft OSI Operational Manual, the Group takes note of the paper issued by the Task Leader on a Targeted Programme of Work (CTBT/WGB/TL-18/45, dated 1 February 2011), which states that the programme outlined therein should be achievable in the schedule of sessions as approved by the Preparatory Commission at its Thirty-Fifth session and as contained in decision CTBT/PC-35/2/Annex II, dated 17 November 2010. Nevertheless, in light of what has been previously said and of the fact that the terms of this decision have left the possibility of a fourth additional week of meetings for the second session of Working Group B subject to a decision by the latter at this session - as reflected in paragraph 29 of the Report of the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Preparatory Commission (CTBT/PC- 35/2, dated 15 November 2010) -, the Group of 77 and China hereby reconfirms its position on this matter. The Group of 77 and China is confident that, with the help of an improved and more efficient work methodology, in its current session Working Group B will succeed in progressing in the implementation of its programme of work - including in the OSI Major Programme and in the draft OSI Operational Manual. Mr Chairman,

8. With regard to the implementation of the pilot project for financing the participation of technical experts from developing countries in Working Group B meetings, while the Group of 77 and China is appreciative both of the voluntary contributions made by States Signatories and of the work conducted by the Provisional Technical Secretariat, it believes that the participation of developing countries should be further enhanced. It also believes that, to this end, additional ways and means should be sought so as to further expand the number of participants, and that, in this process, due consideration should be given to the need to preserve an equitable geographical distribution so that participation may be wholly and not partially representative of the entire community of States Signatories.

9. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the fact that in recent years quite a number of activities have been organized by the Provisional Technical Secretariat outside of Austria. However, for various reasons, especially reasons relating to some hosting countries, experts from some Signatory States selected by the Provisional Technical Secretariat were unable to participate in these activities. The Group is concerned over this situation and asks that the Provisional Technical Secretariat take such factors into account when organizing activities in the future, with a view to ensuring the widest possible participation by experts from Signatory States. Mr Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China thanks the Executive Secretary for the report on the verification-related activities undertaken by the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the period July-December 2010 (CTBT/ES/2010/4, dated 25 January 2011), and takes note of the report on the status of Provisional Technical Secretariat work on International Monitoring System stations, radionuclide laboratories and noble gas systems as of 31 December 2010 (CTBT/PTS/INF.142/Rev.28, dated 26 January 2011).

11. In this latter regard, the Group notes, in particular, that 254 out of the 272 International Monitoring Stations that had been installed as of 31 December 2010, have been certified; that 10 out of the 16 radionuclide laboratories have equally been certified; and that 27 out of the 40 noble gas systems have been installed - with three of those having already been certified. Likewise, the Group notes that the 272 International Monitoring Stations installed as of the cut-off date of the said report represent 80 per cent of the IMS network. The Group of 77 and China believes that priority should be given to protecting investments already made and to finalizing the installation of those International Monitoring Stations for which work is already under way.

12. The Group of 77 and China considers the project for the reconstruction of stations HA3 and IS14 in the Juan Fernández Islands to be one of the issues having the highest priority, due to the importance of such stations within the IMS network. To this end, the Group is looking forward to a progress report from the Provisional Technical Secretariat on the matter.

13. As for the report of the Executive Secretary on the verification-related activities undertaken by the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the period July-December 2010, the Group of 77 and China cannot help but notice the persistent imbalance in the attention given to the three Major Programmes of the

verification system, namely the International Monitoring System (IMS), the International Data Centre (IDC) and on-site inspections (OSI). The Group of 77 and China deems it opportune to reiterate its concern over the fact that, despite the statement contained in paragraph 1 of the aforementioned report to the contrary, there continues to be an excessive focus on station-building, an imbalance that goes in clear detriment of the overriding importance assigned by the Group of 77 and China to duly safeguarding existing investments.

14. Nevertheless, the Group of 77 and China would like to state that, as it said at the previous session of Working Group B, it is both cognizant of and grateful to the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the ongoing efforts undertaken by it to redress the existing imbalance. The Group of 77 and China views these adjustments as a step in the right direction, and encourages the Provisional Technical Secretariat to continue to seek efficiencies and revisit the prioritization across the Major Programmes of the verification regime of the CTBT in order to attain a regime that is balanced, coherent and efficient. Mr Chairman,

15. Regarding the IMS and, more specifically, the activities conducted by the Provisional Technical Secretariat in the field of technology development during the reported period, the Group of 77 and China takes note with satisfaction of the Infrasound Technology Workshop organized by the Tunisian National Data Centre in Tunis from 18 to 22 October 2010; the CTBTO Advanced Training/Capacity-Building Course for National Data Centre Technical Staff in South-East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East (SEAPFE) held in Malaysia from 18 to 29 October 2010; as well as of the workshop on noble gas monitoring and IMS radionuclide laboratories hosted by the Argentine Regulatory Authority in Buenos Aires from 1 to 5 November 2010. It is the view of the Group of 77 and China that these three activities provide clear examples of the benefits that can be reaped from a productive interaction of the Provisional Technical Secretariat with the scientific and technological sectors, thus helping ensure that the IMS remains scientifically and technologically relevant.

16. Regarding the IDC, the Group of 77 and China supports the attention given by the Provisional Technical Secretariat to the introduction of measures relating to station performance/reliability and data availability, quality and timeliness, a matter identified by the Policy Making Organs to be a priority. The Group of 77 and China renews its call for realistic, sustainable, long-term solutions - such as the reallocation of staff and funds from other Major Programmes for this purpose, if necessary - to address the increasing demands imposed on PTS staff as a result of the steady expansion of the IDC. It also welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Provisional Technical Secretariat in the realms of capacity building and training, aimed at enhancing the capability of all States to participate fully in the verification system. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China takes note with satisfaction of the delivery, installation and commissioning of National Data Centre (NDC) equipment to Congo and Costa Rica, as well as of the delivery of equipment to Kenya, Senegal and the Central African Republic. Also, the Group of 77 and China views with satisfaction the continued implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through the joint assistance to be provided to Haiti and, in this framework, the prospective delivery of basic equipment for the establishment of an NDC in that country.

17. As far as National Data Centres are concerned, the Group of 77 and China deems worth noting that it views CTBTO online support as a useful and cost-effective tool for developing States Signatories, to tackle technical problems that they may encounter in their respective NDCs.

18. The Group of 77 and China stresses the importance of strengthening technical capabilities of States Signatories through an improvement of their ability to benefit more from the global verification regime, in particular the use of data collected by the IMS and IDC products resulting from data analysis, including the technologies used for a greater understanding of natural hazard risks, earth processes and other scientific uses.

19. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China encourages the Provisional Technical Secretariat to finalize the "Capacity Building Project", aimed at providing States Signatories with training courses and workshops on the data products and software of the PTS related to seismic, infrasound, hydroacoustic, radionuclide and

Atmospheric Transport Models, thus contributing to the use of civil and scientific applications for socioeconomic development.

20. Regarding the OSI, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Concept for the Preparation and Conduct of the Next Integrated Field Exercise (IFE) (CTBT/PTS/INF.1105, dated 27 January 2011), aimed at, as the Provisional Technical Secretariat states in the said document, developing a roadmap and methodology for the preparation and conduct of a second IFE it plans to conduct in 2014. It also takes note of the Adjustment of the OSI Action Plan (CTBT/PTS/INF.1106, dated 19 January 2011), which, as the Provisional Technical Secretariat puts it, provides suggestions on possible adjustments to the Action Plan in light of the possible impact of the IFE concept. The Group of 77 and China considers that, although the on-site inspection component of the verification regime needs to be further developed and, if necessary, adjusted, this should always be done in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Policy Making Organs. Furthermore, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that, for such process to be effective, it should include a thorough assessment of the experience drawn from the IFE conducted in Kazakhstan in 2008, and that it should take, realistically, due account of all cost and sustainability considerations involved, within the prospects of the entry into force of the Treaty.

21. The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its position regarding the level of "OSI readiness": any definition prior to the entry into force of the Treaty has to be fully developed and agreed by the Policy Making Organs.

22. Finally, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the note presented by the Executive Secretary as an addendum to the Status of National Implementation Measures, Including Privileges and Immunities, Facility Agreements and the PTS Programme of Legal Assistance (CTBT/PTS/INF.1095/Add.1, dated 1 February 2011).

Mr Chairman,

23. The Group of 77 and China is confident that the delegations attending the current session will engage in fruitful and relevant discussions that, hopefully, by the end of these deliberations, will result in substantial progress on the different issues on the agenda of Working Group B.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.