



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B, 22 AUGUST - 9 SEPTEMBER 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-Seventh Session of Working Group B. The Group is confident that, under your guidance and with the deft assistance of your Task Leaders, Working Group B will conduct its business guided by the objective of making sound progress in the tasks entrusted to it.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Executive Secretary for the report he conveyed orally on Monday, 22 August, as well as the Provisional Technical Secretariat for its work in preparation for this session. The Group also wishes to commend the PTS for the useful briefings provided on Thursday, 18 August, prior to the commencement of the Thirty-Seventh Session of Working Group B. The Group would welcome that, for future briefings, the PTS identify and prioritize those issues relevant to the discussions scheduled for the Working Group B deliberations, in accordance with the working modality agreed at the Thirty-Sixth Session.

Mr Chairman,

3. The Group welcomes the Science and Technology conference held last June, for it has provided an instance for the CTBT to identify and eventually benefit from scientific and technological developments potentially relevant to the Treaty's verification regime. This has proven to be all the more important in light of the accident that took place at Fukushima last March, an event that has put the technological capabilities of the CTBT to the test and has shown that such capabilities have valuable civil and scientific applications to offer, beyond the fundamental purpose and specific mandate as foreseen in the Treaty.
4. The Group takes note of the Report of the Executive Secretary on verification related activities for the period January-June 2011 (CTBT/ES/2011/2 and Corr.1), and the Report on the Status of Provisional Technical Secretariat Work on International Monitoring System Stations and Radionuclide Laboratories (CTBT/PTS/INF.142/Rev.29).
5. The 276 International Monitoring System stations having been installed as of the cut-off date of the report issued by the PTS represent a stark 86 per cent of the IMS network foreseen in the Treaty. This reinforces the need, repeatedly advocated by the Group, for the PTS to prioritize, within the International Monitoring System, the tasks of safeguarding investments already made and of finalizing the installation of those IMS stations for which work is already under way. The Group reaffirms its position that the provisional operation status of the IMS and IDC facilities should be maintained.
6. In a broader context, it is the belief of the Group that, for the verification regime to be effective there needs to be a balance among the three Major Programmes of the verification system, the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre, and On-Site Inspection. The Group appreciates the efforts undertaken by the PTS in order to redress the imbalance among them and, in light of the importance the Group assigns to further developing the OSI component of the verification regime to this end, it welcomes the recommendation made by Working Group B at its Thirty-Sixth Session, to hold an Integrated Field Exercise in 2014.

7. The Group endorses the request made to the PTS at that session, to systematically continue to seek efficiencies among the Major Programmes and, in accordance with the recommendation made to the Preparatory Commission on that occasion, looks forward to submission by the PTS of a proposal on the Programme and Budget for 2012, for consideration by States Signatories in the context of the informal consultations to be chaired by Ambassador Guerreiro.

8. On a related note, it is important that Working Group B capitalize on the extended hours allotted to its sessions and make efficient use of time, in order to make sound progress on the OSI Operational Manual, a key document to the IFE envisaged for 2014 and, more broadly, to the development of the overall OSI component of the verification regime, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Policy Making Organs.

9. It is the position of the Group that any definition of the level of "OSI readiness" prior to the entry into force of the Treaty has to be fully developed and agreed by the Policy Making Organs.

10. For the IFE 2014 to be both viable and effective, it should build up on the experience drawn from the IFE conducted in Kazakhstan in 2008; it should be based on an Operational Manual that is coherent, operative and well developed, in accordance with the criteria set by the PMOs; it should be rooted on financial projections that are realistic; and it should be envisaged within the prospects of the entry into force of the Treaty.

11. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to working constructively with you, the Task Leaders and all delegations present at the current deliberations in the hope that we can make progress on the different issues in front of us.

Thank you.