



VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REZA NAJAFI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, 22 JUNE 2017

Vienna, 22 June 2017

Madam Chairperson,

1. At the outset, the Group would like to take this opportunity to renew to you, the assurances of its full support and cooperation in reaching a productive session.
2. On Agenda item 2 concerning the Report of the Executive Secretary, the Group once again expressed its appreciation to the Executive Secretary for his introductory statement and further noted three reports of the Executive Secretary as follow:
 - 2.1 Report of the Executive Secretary on the verification related activities for the period from July to December 2016;
 - 2.2 Annual Report 2016;
 - 2.3 Report of the Executive Secretary on non-verification related activities for the period January to March 2017.

Madame Chairperson,

3. The Group takes note of the report of Working Group A (WGA) at its Fifty-First Session and its recommendations. The Group's statement at the recent May session of Working Group A, has clearly underlined its position on various substantive issues contained in the said report.
4. The Group takes note of the report of Working Group B (WGB) at its Forty-Eighth Session, and its recommendation in paragraph 65 of the said report. The Group notes with appreciation progress made by the PTS in implementing the 2016-2017 verification related programme. The Group strongly emphasizes the importance it attaches to capacity-building and training and to the various activities carried out by the PTS in this field as a means of improving the ability of States Signatories, in particular developing countries, to fully participate in the Treaty's verification regime. The Group reiterates its position that capacity-building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the Regular Budget.
5. The Group takes note of the report of the Advisory Group at its 48th Session and its recommendations. The Group reiterates its appreciation to the efforts and expertise of the Advisory Group in providing necessary observations, conclusions and recommendations on issues related to the associated administrative and budgetary and financial matters.

Madam Chairperson,

6. The Group takes note of the Initial 2018-2019 Programme and Budget proposals as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1390 and Corr.1. The Group in its statement at the WGA in May 2017 has clearly expressed its principled positions and views as well as sought further clarifications on the initial Programme and Budget proposals. While the Group looks forward to receiving the revised 2018-2019 Programme and Budget proposals, the Group continues to urge the PTS, in the preparation of the revised proposal, to take into account the following key principled positions:

6.1 The importance in promoting a balanced approach and appropriate allocation of resources among the three dimensions of the verification regime namely the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre and On-Site Inspection;

6.2 The importance in ensuring any savings or reprioritization of resources do not jeopardize the efforts by the PTS towards the effective strengthening of capacity-building and training activities, which aim at increasing the capabilities of States Signatories to participate in the verification regime;

7. While Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is an internal planning tool which provides useful guidance to the PTS in designing programmes and undertaking its activities for the next programme and budget cycles, the Group views that MTS is not a document adopted by the Commission and is non-binding in nature. Therefore, the Group views that any references to the MTS throughout the text of the draft Programme and Budget document should be changed accordingly. The Group requests the PTS to have an exchange of views with interested delegations on the margins of WGB this coming August on several technical aspects of MTS for 2018-2021.

8. The Group recognizes that the following elements must underpin the consideration of this programme and budget:

8.1 The current well advanced status of the verification regime;

8.2 The mandate of the PrepCom on the provisional operation of the system;

8.3 The actual prospects of entry into force of the Treaty;

8.4 The need to minimize the financial burden borne by State Signatories.

Madam Chairperson,

9. On the appointments and elections, the Group, at this session of the Preparatory Commission, fully endorses the recommendation of the Working Group A on the appointment of the Auditor General of Thailand as the External Auditor of the Commission for the audit of the financial statements of the periods 2018 and 2019.

10. On the 2016 Human Resources Management Report, the Group reaffirms its principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the staff of the Organization particularly at the Professional and higher levels, as important considerations in the recruitment process. The Group encourages the PTS, under the leadership of the Director of Human Resources, to continue its efforts to improve the representation of staff in accordance with the above principles. The Group further requests the PTS to provide, in its future human resources' reports, more comprehensive information on staff recruited and separated from PTS according to their respective nationalities during the reporting period.

11. The Group welcomes the inclusion of item 10 entitled "Developing guidelines for holding extraordinary session of the Preparatory Commission", as part of the Agenda of the present meeting. The Group appreciates the opportunity to discuss these guidelines and requests the Chairperson to present ideas in this regard.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.