



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP A, 27-28 OCTOBER 2015, DELIVERED BY MR. HELLMUT LAGOS, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., PERMANENT MISSION OF CHILE

Mr Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Ambassador Azeez, chairing the Forty-Eighth Session of Working Group A. The Group would also like to thank you for your continued efforts and remarkable work throughout your chairmanship and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. The Group further takes this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of its full support and cooperation.
2. The Group thanks the Executive Secretary, Mr Lassina Zerbo, for his opening remarks and takes note of his report on the non-verification-related activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the Preparatory Commission.
3. The Group also thanks the PTS for preparing the documents for this session and would like to reaffirm the importance for States Signatories to receive all the documents well in advance of the sessions of the Preparatory Commission and its subsidiary bodies.
4. On agenda item 3 pertaining to the review of Advisory Group recommendations contained in CTBT/AG-45/1, the Group of 77 and China thanks the Advisory Group and its Chairman, Mr Michael Weston, for their able and dedicated work, and takes note of the report of the Advisory Group at its Forty-Fifth Session.
5. The Group also takes note of the final draft proposals of the 2016-2017 Programme and Budget proposals contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1321/Rev.1 and its corrigenda, which include additional information on the implementation of the multiyear funding modality.
6. In this regard, the Group would like to see the multiyear funding modality include aspects of capacity building in the verification technologies. In addition, the Group sees a need to recommend parameters to the Preparatory Commission on the use and purposes of the multiyear funding modality.
7. The Group also notes that the overall budget for 2016 was proposed at a level slightly below zero real growth compared to 2015, and takes note with appreciation of the savings made by the PTS. While the Group values the importance for the PTS to continue seeking efficiencies in the regular Budget, the Group is of the view that any further savings should not jeopardize the efforts by the PTS towards the effective enhancement of capacity building and training, which aim at increasing the capabilities of States Signatories to participate in the verification regime. Therefore the Group reiterates its position that capacity building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the regular Budget.
8. The Group thanks the PTS for the presentation to States Signatories. We also thank Ambassador Azeez for holding informal consultations throughout the budgetary process, which have enabled a substantive discussion on the Programme and Budget proposals, between States Signatories as well as with the PTS.

Mr Chairman,

9. With regard to the recruitment of staff, the Group, while taking note of the difficulties faced by the PTS, reiterates its principled position that striving for equitable geographic distribution as well as gender balance in the overall composition of the PTS are of utmost importance. We call on the PTS to work proactively in the pursuit of these two objectives when recruiting staff to serve at the PTS. Far from being incompatible

with professional competence and expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution are important considerations that need to be factored in during recruitment, in particular at the time of appointing staff in the Professional category. The Group is concerned by the overall human resources situation and is closely following the issue. In this regard, the Group looks forward to the internal audit conclusions on the matter.

10. On the status of and options for the Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF), the Group would like to reiterate its request to receive more information on the implications, estimated costs and duration of the proposed temporary option, as well as of the possible permanent options, as soon as it is available.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.