



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B, DELIVERED BY MS. AVRIL COETZEE, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. PERMANENT MISSION OF NAMBIA, 20 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 2017

Mr Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Dr. Joachim Schulze, conducting our work in this Forty-Eight Session of Working Group B together with the Vice Chairs and Task Leaders. The Group trusts that the next two weeks will provide States Signatories with a good opportunity to engage in productive discussions on the very rich agenda of issues before us. The Group remains committed to supporting the ongoing efforts for transparency and inclusiveness in the discussions relating to the methods of work of this Working Group, and to assure you of its full cooperation and constructive engagement.

2. The Group would like to thank the Executive Secretary for his written report on progress in the implementation of the verification related activities for the period July to December 2016, as well as for his opening remarks. The Group would also like to thank the PTS for preparing documents and making them available for this session, and encourages further efforts to make all documents available well in advance of our sessions.

Mr Chairman,

3. The Group reiterates its principled position on the importance of sustaining a balanced approach, including in allocating resources and time, among the three Major Programmes of the verification regime, namely the International Monitoring System (IMS), the International Data Centre (IDC) and On-Site Inspection (OSI). To this end, it calls once more on the PTS to seek the necessary efficiencies in the process, so that the CTBT verification regime is balanced, coherent, as well as robust while efficient.

4. On specific verification related activities conducted by the PTS, the Group would like to make the following remarks:

(a) The Group welcomes the fact that, as reported by the PTS, as a result of the joint efforts of the States hosting IMS facilities, local operators and the PTS, the data availability of certified IMS stations remained high, while levels of unauthenticated data availability during the second half of 2016 increased compared with the first half of 2016, up to 96.71% in the case of infrasound stations.

(b) Regarding the IMS, the Group takes note of the activities undertaken by the PTS during the reporting period, in particular the progress achieved regarding the installation of remaining Stations in countries of the Group, which entails the strong political commitment as well as the commitment of human and material resources by developing countries.

(c) Regarding the management of life cycle costs, including post-certification activity (PCA) contracts for certified IMS stations, the Group takes note of the continued activities of the PTS in the standardization of the services provided under PCA contracts and reiterates its call on all States Signatories to cooperate with the PTS in a joint effort to lower life cycle costs, including those relating to PCAs.

(d) On the status of the project to establish a permanent replacement for the Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF), the Group takes note of the information update provided in CTBT/PTS/INF.1392 and looks forward to receiving further updated information as requested by WGB in its last session.

(e) Regarding the IDC Progressive Commissioning the Group reaffirms the importance of States Signatories' oversight and engagement with the PTS in the progressive commissioning process. The Group notes that delegations may raise specific questions or make comments on Phase 5a of the IDC Progressive

Commissioning Plan at the current session of WGB. The Group takes note of the Roadmap submitted by the PTS for Phase 5b of the progressive commissioning of the International Data Center (CTBT/PTS/INF.1384), while bearing in mind the recommendation made by the latest session of this Working Group, for the Commission, at its Forty-Eighth Session, to consider, with a view to adopting, the PTS proposal of a detailed road map for the activities envisaged for reaching the milestones under Phase 5b, as contained in document ECS/DIS/WGB-46/PTS-MATERIAL/8/Add.1, without prejudice to any further revisions presented by the PTS to WGB or proposed amendments provided by States Signatories.

(f) Regarding the OSI Action Plan 2016-2019, the Group notes that 32 out of 43 projects have been launched and three have already been achieved. In this context, the Group welcomes the launching of the third training cycle for Onsite Surrogate Inspectors with two training courses held in October 2016 and February 2017 in Slovakia and Jordan, respectively.

5. The Group would like to further encourage the Executive Secretary in his efforts to significantly improve the gender balance and the equitable geographical distribution across the Organization.

6. The Group welcomes the various activities conducted by the PTS in the area of Capacity Building and Training. The Group appreciates the efforts of the PTS to enhance the capabilities of States Signatories through its National Data Centre (NDC) development workshops, advanced regional training courses and expert visits in the field for the on-the-job training. We encourage the PTS to keep up its work in this area, which the Group considers of the utmost importance in the development of the national capacities of States Signatories that are required in the build-up and long-term sustainment of the verification regime of the CTBT.

7. The Group also welcomes the organization of the Science and Technology Conference (SnT2017), that will take place from 26 Jun to 30 Jun 2017, and encourages the Organization to facilitate and support the participation of experts from a diverse range of scientific perspectives and backgrounds from all regions, in particular those of developing countries. The Group reaffirms the efforts of the PTS to leverage the Science and Technology conference to support the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and echoes the request submitted to the PTS to continue to include outstanding issues in the agenda of this and future Science and Technology conferences, and will remain actively engaged in this regard.

8. The Group continues to believe that together with science and technology, capacity building plays an important role in addressing development challenges across a wide range of issues, including the internationally agreed development goals. In this regard, the Group also notes the diverse activities conducted by the PTS in the area of capacity building and training, and encourages further efforts in this area. The Group appreciates the efforts of the PTS to enhance the capabilities of States Signatories through their National Data Centres (NDC) and, in this regard, the Group notes with satisfaction the training events carried out at NDCs, the station operator courses and the technical workshops organized by the PTS. The Group encourages the PTS to continue to pursue and to enhance this kind of activity, which is of the utmost importance in the development of the national capacities of States Signatories, especially developing countries, which are required in the build-up and long term sustainment of the Treaty's verification regime.

9. To conclude, Mr Chairman, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to working with you, the Vice Chairs and the Task Leaders in a constructive and engaged manner, so that progress can be made on the different issues on the agenda of this Working Group.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.