



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FORTY-NINETH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B, DELIVERED BY MR. DATO' ADNAN BIN OTHMAN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA, 21 AUGUST - 31 AUGUST 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank you, Dr. Joachim Schulze for convening this meeting and also assure you of its continued cooperation and support.

2. The Group would also like to thank Mr. Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary for his opening remarks and his report on verification related activities for the period from January to June 2017. The Group appreciates the Provisional Technical Secretariat's (PTS) efforts in preparing all documents well in advance for the consideration of this session.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group takes note of the verification related elements in the revised draft Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2018-2019 as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1390/Rev.1. The Group reiterates the importance of promoting a balanced approach in ensuring 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. The Group calls on the PTS to seek the necessary efficiencies in the process so that the CTBT verification regime is balanced, coherent and effective.

4. The Group also takes note of recommendation to the Executive Secretary contained in paragraph 43(2) of the report of the 48th session of Advisory Group concerning the reference to the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) in draft Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2018-2019. While the PTS has provided the clarification on the MTS in revised draft Programme and Budget proposals, the Group once again, reiterates that the MTS is a non-binding internal planning tool for the PTS in designing programs and undertaking its activities for the next programme and budget cycles. The Group further reiterates that the MTS is not a document adopted by the Commission and therefore the MTS document should be removed accordingly from the Annex of the said revised draft programme and budget proposals.

Mr. Chairman,

5. On the Executive Secretary's report on verification related activities for the 6 months period from January to June 2017, the Group would like to make the following remarks:

5.1 The Group takes note of the progress of activities under International Monitoring System (IMS) during the reporting period, which among others, include continuous increased data availability of certified IMS, improvement on the timeliness of the review products, increased number of certified stations and installed stations in several States Signatories from the developing countries;

5.2 The Group notes with appreciation various capacity building activities, training and workshops organised by the PTS in the International Monitoring System (IMS), International Data Centre (IDC), and On-site Inspection (OSI);

5.3 The Group appreciates PTS' efforts to enhance the capabilities of States Signatories through its National Data Centre (NDC). The Group notes with satisfaction trainings and workshops organised by the PTS for

States Signatories, technical experts and stations operators. The Group encourages the PTS to continue its efforts in this regard as these trainings and workshops strengthen national capacities of States Signatories especially from the developing countries in fulfilling their verification responsibilities. These are essential to support the development and promotion of a long-term sustainability of Treaty's verification regime;

5.4 The Group commends the PTS for the successful organisation of the Sixth CTBT: Science and Technology conference in June 2017. The Group is pleased to note that this conference has attracted over 900 participants including 40 percent increase of women's participation compared to the 2015 conference. Apart from its high participation, the Group views that this conference continues to serve as an important platform for scientists to exchange views on various topics which could provide useful contributions to the Treaty's verification system;

5.5 The Group reaffirms the importance of States Signatories' oversight and engagement with the PTS in the IDC progressive commissioning process. The Group notes that the amended version of the Initial Plan for the Progressive Commissioning of the IDC includes a milestone for Phase 5b to complete the Validation and Acceptance Test Plan (VATP). The Group also notes that the revised draft of the VATP, with updates addressing comments from States Signatories was made available on 12 January 2017 and a meeting of experts was held from 3-4 July 2017 to provide inputs on the draft. The Group further notes that the work on the VATP will continue to address changes in the development of the various Operational Manuals as well as feedback from the PTS conducted experiments. The Group looks forward to receiving further information on these changes at the meetings held during this session;

5.6 The Group appreciates the updates provided by the PTS on the site selection and the project management of the design of the Equipment Storage and Management Facility (ESMF), including the implication and estimated cost of site selection. The Group also looks forward to receiving further updates on the development of ESMF;

5.7 The Group notes with satisfaction the progress made under the OSI action plan for 2016-2019. The Group notes that 34 out of 43 projects under the action plan were under implementation in the first half of 2017 and four had been completed at the end of June 2017. The Group appreciates receiving regular in-depth reports by the PTS on the progress of implementation of the OSI action plan;

5.8 On the management of life-cycle costs, including post-certification activity (PCA) contracts for certified IMS stations, the Group takes note of the continuous efforts by the PTS to standardize 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 related to PCA.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group expresses its appreciation to your efforts in presenting the paper on the working methods of the Working Group B (WGB) as contained in document CTBT/WGB-49/INF.5. The Group would like to continue with the current method of work for the next two years (2018-2019) and to revisit this issue at the last WGB session in 2019.

7. Finally, the Group looks forward to continue working constructively with you, the Vice-Chairs and the Task Leaders in order to achieve a fruitful outcome of this session.

Thank Mr. Chairman.