



STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA AT THE OCCASION OF THE 50th SESSION OF WORKING GROUP B, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CARLOS JÁTIVA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR, 12 – 23 MARCH 2018

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Dr. Joachim Schulze, conducting our work in this 50th Session of Working Group B together with the Vice-Chairs and Task Leaders. The Group seizes this opportunity to congratulate you on your re-election and to assure you of its full cooperation and support for your new mandate.

2. The Group would also like to thank Dr. Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary, for his opening remarks and his report on verification related activities for the period from July to December 2017. The Group appreciates the Provisional Technical Secretariat's (PTS) efforts in preparing documents and making them available for this session, and encourages further efforts to make all documents available well in advance.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group reiterates its principle position on the importance of sustaining a balanced approach, including in allocating human and material resources, 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 continues to encourage the PTS to seek the necessary efficiencies in the process, to ensure that the CTBT verification regime is balanced, coherent, as well as robust while efficient.

4. On specific verification related activities conducted by the PTS, as contained in the Executive Secretary's report, the Group would like to make the following remarks:

a) The Group notes the continuous progress, as reported by the PTS, on the joint efforts of the States hosting IMS facilities, local operators and the PTS, under the provisional operational nature of the IMS. The Group also notes that the data availability of certified IMS stations remained high and the timeliness requirements for Reviewed products met more than 99%.

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 and certification of remaining Stations in developing countries, namely China and Ecuador, which entails the strong political commitment to and the deployment of human and material resources by developing countries.

c) 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 encourages all States Signatories to continue to cooperate with the PTS in a joint effort to lower life cycle costs, including those related to PCA.

d) Regarding the IDC Progressive Commissioning, the Group reaffirms the importance of States Signatories' oversight and engagement with the PTS in this process. The Group considers it useful for the PTS to provide WGB, for its consideration, with the report on the status of implementation of recommendations of the First Full Scale Experiment (FSE1), and the evaluation report of the Second Experiment (FSE2) for the implementation of the Third Experiment (FSE3). The Group notes the progress achieved in this regard through the 2nd Experiment with the participation of experts from developing

countries. The Group would like to emphasize the importance of continued involvement of experts from the State Signatories in performing and evaluating the envisaged experiments.

e) The Group considers that, continuing to have a dedicated task leader meeting on IDC progressive commissioning in each session of WGB could be useful, in accordance with the mandate provided by the PrepCom in its 47th session.

f) The Group reiterates 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 also reiterates its position that capacity-building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the Regular Budget.

g) In this context, the Group notes the Multi-Year Programme and Action Plan for Capacity-Building and Training, contained in document ECS/WGB-50/PTS/12, which includes the target audience and objectives of each type of event and takes into consideration a balanced and equitable distribution of events per annum and per region. While acknowledging the efforts of the PTS in this area, the Group calls on the PTS to implement the WGB request at its 49th session to provide the action plan in a structured manner and in a project form that incorporates clear targets and a performance assessment mechanism. The Group, therefore, looks forward to receiving a revised document.

h) The Group also commends the involvement of developing countries in hosting capacity building activities or events, namely, East Asian NDC Workshop held in Viet Nam and the RSTT Workshop held in Namibia, during the reporting period, as well as the African Infrasound Workshop held in Tunisia and the upcoming NDC Workshop to be held in Algeria, this year.

i) The Group notes the progress achieved in the establishment of a permanent Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF) after the launch of construction, on the 25th January 2018, in the selected site in Seibersdorf (Austria).

j) The Group takes note of the progress made under the OSI action plan for 2016-2019. It also notes that 33 out of 43 projects under the action plan were under implementation as of the end of 2017 and 8 had been completed while 2 remain to be launched. The Group would like to request the PTS to provide the WGB with technical reports of the implementation of the completed projects and with the opportunity for the dedicated Expert Meetings to consider those reports. The Group notes, in particular, the progress achieved in the 3rd OSI training cycle and commends the involvement of developing countries in hosting OSI courses during 2018, namely, Argentina and South Africa. In this regard, the Group would like to once again reiterate its request for the PTS to ensure full participation of all candidates from developing countries in all future OSI training events. The Group calls upon the PTS to increase participation of candidates from developing countries in the OSI training courses.

Mr. Chairman,

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 Preparatory Commission.

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