



STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE TWENTY-SIXTH JOINT MEETING OF WORKING GROUPS A AND B OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION 2 MARCH 2017, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REZA NAJAFI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Messrs Co-Chairs,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank you Ambassador Othman from Malaysia and Dr. Joachim Schulze from Germany, for convening this joint meeting. This is indeed an important platform for States Signatories to continue exchanging views on issues of importance on its agenda. The Group assures the distinguished Co-Chairs of its full cooperation and support.

2. The Group also thanks the Executive Secretary, Dr. Lassina Zerbo, for his opening remarks.

Messrs Co-Chairs,

3. The Group notes the initial draft Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2018-2019 as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1390 and would like to reiterate its principled positions on the following:

3.1 The Group strongly underlines the importance of promoting a balanced approach and appropriate allocation of resources towards the three dimensions of the verification regime namely the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre and On-Site Inspection;

3.2 The Group firmly believes that the process leading to the approval of the Programme and Budget as well as discussions involving all parties concerned that is the Preparatory Commission, States Signatories, the subsidiary bodies, as well as the Advisory Group, should be held in a transparent and inclusive manner;

3.3 The Group encourages the PTS to continue pursuing timely issuance of documents related to the Programme and Budget as well as for the Chair of Working Group A, to convene more regular informal discussions, so as to allow sufficient time and opportunity for substantive exchanges of views and discussions on this issue;

3.4 The Group continues to uphold the importance of capacity-building and training for developing countries among States Signatories and commends the PTS for its continuous efforts to increase the capabilities of all States Signatories to participate in the verification regime through various capacity-building and training activities. Therefore, the Group strongly views that capacity building activities should be provided with sufficient funds through the regular budget;

3.5 The Group strongly encourages the PTS to seek synergies with States Signatories making extra budgetary and in-kind contributions, which should be channeled to activities that have been considered by the subsidiary bodies and the Advisory Group as well as approved by the Preparatory Commission.

Messrs Co-Chairs,

4. The Group takes notes of the highlights of programmatic deliverables and PTS' efforts in identifying and implementing further efficiencies and cost-savings in the planning for the 2018-2019 Programme and Budget.

5. The Group also notes that some PTS internal documents related to the Programme and Budget including the Midterm Strategy for the period 2018-2021 are still being finalised. The Group looks forward to receiving these documents before providing its full comments. Finally, the Group remains committed to working closely with all States Signatories and the PTS in reaching a fruitful outcome on this important issue.

Thank you, Messrs Co-Chairs.