



STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE TWENTY-SECOND JOINT MEETING OF WORKING GROUPS A AND B OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION 24 FEBRUARY 2014, DELIVERED BY MS. MADURIKA WENINGER, MINISTER, PERMANENT MISSION OF SRI LANKA

1. The Group of 77 and China welcomes you, Ambassador Azeez, as Chairman of Working Group A. We thank you and Dr Haak for convening the Twenty-Second Joint Meeting of Working Groups A and B, and trust that this session will be a good opportunity for States Signatories to exchange views on the issue in its agenda. We assure the distinguished Co-Chairs of the full cooperation of the Group.

Messrs Co-Chairs,

2. The Group thanks the Executive Secretary, Dr Lassina Zerbo, for his opening statement, and would like to make the following remarks:

3. As the Group has said on previous occasions, it is important for Working Groups A and B to establish priorities and provide clear guidance to the Provisional Technical Secretariat, as the latter sets to work on the budget.

4. In this regard, the Group reiterates its view that, in the preparation of the draft Programme and Budget for 2015, the Provisional Technical Secretariat has to keep in mind the global situation of financial austerity. Fiscal prudence is of the utmost importance. In this spirit, the Group is confident that the PTS will propose a programme-driven budget.

5. The Group strongly encourages the Provisional Technical Secretariat to seek synergies with States Signatories making extrabudgetary contributions, which should go to activities that have been fully informed to the Policy Making Organs of the Preparatory Commission.

6. The Group believes that the process leading to the approval of the Programme and Budget should be rooted on robust and inclusive discussions, involving States Signatories, the Advisory Group, the subsidiary bodies and the Preparatory Commission as the plenary organ ultimately responsible for its approval. For the process to be fully transparent and inclusive, it is essential that the PTS brings out, early on in the process, some sort of conceptual paper outlining the different elements that would provide the backbone of the proposal as it will be issuing it later on, further down the process.

7. Timely issuance of this type of document by the PTS would kick-off the discussions among States Signatories, something that could be done in the format of an informative technical briefing, to be followed by the open-ended discussions requested by the Preparatory Commission at its Forty-First Session.

8. This would allow States to engage in substantive exchanges of views based on a concrete document well before the actual issuance of a draft proposal by the PTS. In turn, it would feed, through a substantive interaction on specific elements thus put forward by the PTS, the actual process of elaboration of the draft proposal itself. Past experience has shown that issuance of a draft programme and budget proposal without any prior discussion based on a preliminary document of this sort has seriously curtailed the possibility of States Signatories providing effective feedback to the PTS, ultimately pre-empting substantive changes to the initial proposal simply because there was no time left in the decision making process to revert to the PTS and comply with the necessary instances of discussion by States Signatories, recommendation by Working Group A and approval by the Preparatory Commission.

9. Lastly, the Group requests that this type of conceptual paper containing the priorities, areas and issues identified by the PTS as relevant to the 2015 draft Programme and Budget, be issued on time for its consideration by the Advisory Group at its next session, so that this can, in turn, feed the discussions of the next session of Working Group A.

Thank you.