



STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE 16TH JOINT MEETING OF WORKING GROUPS A AND B OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION 28 FEBRUARY 2011, DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR ALI ASGHAR SOLTANIEH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IR OF IRAN

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the States Signatories of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank you and Mr. Hein Haak, Chairperson of Working Group B, for convening the sixteenth joint meeting of Working Groups A and B. The Group also thanks the Executive Secretary, Ambassador Tibor Tóth, for his opening remarks at the commencement of the meeting.
2. Regarding Agenda Item 3, the Update to the Medium Term Plan: 2009-2013, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) for the third update to this important document, as contained in CTBT/PTS/INF.1115, dated 10 February 2011. The Group appreciates the efforts undertaken by the PTS in describing further adjustments in priority activities and products identified by it.
3. Specifically, the Group of 77 and China would like to highlight the following elements referred to in the said document:
 4. With respect to the International Monitoring System (IMS), the Group welcomes the announcement made by the PTS in paragraph 2.7, in that, with the funding approved at the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Preparatory Commission, it will begin to implement repair and reconstruction work at the hydroacoustic station HA3 and infrasound station IS14, collocated in the Juan Fernández Islands (Chile). The Group takes note of the statement made by the PTS in terms that this will be the "costliest" IMS station repair/reconstruction so far and that works are expected to continue through 2013, and hopes that the PTS will complete the repairs and reconstruction required to have both stations fully operational at the earliest. The Group expects regular progress reports from the PTS on this issue.
 5. The Group of 77 and China wishes to reiterate its position on the IMS network: priority should be given to duly safeguarding investments already made to sustain the facilities that have been installed and certified, to maintaining the network, and to completing those facilities where work is under way. The Group encourages the PTS to pursue its work with these core objectives in mind, for the purpose of testing and trial operation of the network for validation.
 6. The Group of 77 and China supports the attention given by the PTS to the introduction of measures relating to station performance/reliability and data availability, timeliness and quality, matters identified by the Policy Making Organs to be a priority. It welcomes the addition of infrasound and noble gas data processing to provisional operations, and the subsequent inclusion of all technologies mandated by the Treaty to the daily products of the IDC. This development calls for realistic, sustainable, long term arrangements that will allow the IDC to properly and efficiently process the unprecedented volume of data thus generated. Such developments might require, inter alia, a reallocation of staff and funds from other Major Programmes, as necessary, as well as seeking efficiencies in order to optimize the use of the human resources and technical expertise already available, especially as far as the newly implemented monitoring technologies are concerned.
 7. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the work conducted by the PTS on building technical capacity for National Data Centres (NDCs) and station operators through workshops, training courses and voluntary

contributions to accelerate the build-up of relevant technological infrastructure in developing countries. The Group deems of high importance strengthening technical capabilities of States Signatories through an improvement of their ability to benefit more from the global verification regime, in particular the use of data collected by the IMS and IDC products resulting from data analysis, and is convinced that all efforts pursued in the realms of capacity building and training will doubtlessly enhance the capability of all States to participate fully in the verification system, by helping NDCs to fulfil their tasks and station operators to sustain the IMS network. The Group wishes to see synchronized capacity advancement between the IDC and the NDCs, with particular emphasis being put on availability of resources and capacity building.

8. As far as the On-Site Inspection (OSI) programme is concerned, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the strategic objective as outlined in the third update to the Medium Term Plan, continuing to develop and prepare OSI capabilities in order to reach initial operational readiness for the conduct of an OSI at entry into force, and, in this context, of the action plan developed as a result of the Review and Follow-Up Process for the 2008 Integrated Field Exercise (IFE) (CTBT/PTS/INF.1020, dated 4 August 2009), and the Adjustment of the OSI Action Plan (CTBT/PTS/INF.1106, dated 19 January 2011). As put in the opening statement of the Group of 77 and China to the Thirty-Sixth Session of Working Group B (CTBT/WGB-36/NAT.1, dated 21 February 2011), the Group considers further developing and, if necessary, adjusting the OSI action plan. However, it is the view of the Group that this process should, indefectibly:

- (1) Be conducted in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Policy Making Organs.
- (2) Include, for the effectiveness of the process a thorough assessment of the experience drawn from the IFE conducted in Kazakhstan in 2008, in this respect, the Group is pleased to note that, in its latest update to the Medium Term Plan, the PTS has clearly set the development of OSI capabilities in the framework of a review and follow-up process of IFE08.
- (3) Take realistically due account of all cost and sustainability considerations involved within the actual prospects of entry into force of the Treaty. In this respect, further consideration should be given to any proposal that may impose additional expenses on States Signatories, in particular on the developing countries at this important gathering.

9. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the commencement by the PTS of a detailed planning of the implementation of an IPSAS-compliant Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform, a project considered by the Group to be a priority in light of the expected discontinuance of IMIS and the prospective efficiency associated with the introduction of the ERP platform.

10. Also, the Group views favourably the commitment of the PTS as outlined in paragraph 6.7 of the document, to continue to improve its support to the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies by further enhancing transparency in its reporting to States Signatories by, inter alia, rationalizing written reports and presentations to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, seeking further efficiencies in supporting the work of the Commission through the use of information technology, and increasing the functionality of the Experts Communications System (ECS).

Mr. Chairman,

11. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the Note by the Executive Secretary on the Personnel Situation of the Secretariat as of 31 December 2010 (CTBT/PTS/INF.1112, dated 10 February 2011), and expresses its concern over the persistent imbalance in terms of geographical distribution of the staff members recruited by the PTS. The referenced document shows that as much as 41.87% of staff members originate from the region of North America and Western Europe alone, a fact that, as far as its staffing is concerned, renders the PTS unrepresentative of the wide array of States Signatories forming part of the international community of the CTBT. Regrettably, it has also come to the attention of the Group that, as shown in the document's summary providing information on the composition of regular staff members by gender, a meagre 29.38% of the staff in the Professional category is female, whereas, in comparison, in the General Services category, the female staff add up to 60.47%.

12. These figures depict in an incontestable manner the persistent under-representation at the PTS both of developing countries as well as of female professionals. The Group of 77 and China stresses again the need to respect the criteria of an equitable geographical distribution and of gender balance, and calls on the PTS to take, when recruiting its staff, the necessary steps to rectify the current distortion as soon as possible.

13. Also on human resources, the Group hereby recalls its concern over the fact that some non-regular staff at the PTS should be carrying out tasks typical of regular staff and its expectation in that the PTS shall strive to replace such positions with regular positions, within available resources.

14. Finally, on Agenda Item 4, guidance to the PTS for preparation of the initial draft 2012 Programme and Budget, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate that the need to minimize the financial burden to be borne by States Signatories is considered crucial, taking into account the current well-advanced status of the verification system, the mandate of the Preparatory Commission on the provisional operation of the system, and, as I mentioned before, the actual prospects of entry into force of the Treaty. As a corollary to these elements, the Group of 77 and China has been consistently calling for a strict observance of a zero real growth budget policy. The Group hopes that, in preparing its first draft, the PTS will duly take into account the impact of the past economic and financial crisis that has affected all States Signatories, and undertake all efforts to identify and focus on priority tasks and activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.