



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA AT THE FIFTIETH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CARLOS JÁTIVA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR, 2-4 JULY 2018

Vienna, 2 July 2018

Madam Chairperson,

1. At the outset, the Group avails itself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Ambassador Maria Assunta Accili Sabbatini on your election as Chairperson of the Preparatory Commission and to assure you of its full support and cooperation in reaching a productive session.
2. Under Agenda item 2 concerning the Report of the Executive Secretary, the Group once again expresses its appreciation to the Executive Secretary, Dr Lassina Zerbo, for his introductory statement and further noted three reports of the Executive Secretary as follow:
 - 2.1 Report of the Executive Secretary on the verification related activities for the period from July to December 2017;
 - 2.2 Annual Report 2017;
 - 2.3 Report of the Executive Secretary on non-verification related activities for the period January to March 2018.

Madame Chairperson,

3. The Group would like to reiterate the provisional status of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO until the Treaty's Entry Into Force, in accordance with the resolution CTBT/MSS/RES/1 of 19th November 1996. Furthermore in this regard, the Group takes note of the publication of the United Nations document "Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament" that underlines the importance of the norm against testing for disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and stresses the need of Entry Into Force of the CTBT.
4. The Group would like to thank you for chairing the Working Group A (WGA) at its Fifty-Third Session, in the absence of a Chair of WGA and is looking forward to the election of the new Chairperson and the two Vice-Chairpersons of the WGA under Agenda item 7 of the current session. The Group takes note of the report of the Working Group A (WGA) at its Fifty-Third Session and its recommendations. The Group's statement at the recent session of the Working Group A, has clearly underlined its position on various substantive issues contained in the above-mentioned report.
5. The Group takes note of the report of the Working Group B (WGB) at its Fiftieth Session, and its recommendation contained in paragraph 61 of this report. The Group notes with appreciation progress achieved in implementing the 2016-2017 verification related programme. The Group strongly emphasizes 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. To this end, the Group takes note of wide range of training events, international and regional workshops and station manager course conducted by the PTS and commends the involvement of developing countries in hosting capacity building activities or events, namely, the East Asian NDC Workshop held in August 2017 in Viet Nam, the RSTT Workshop held in November 2017 in Namibia, the African Infrasound Technology Workshop held in February 2018 in Tunisia, the Regional Introductory Course 23 held in April 2018 in Argentina and the NDC workshop that took place in May 2018 in Algeria. In this context, the Group reiterates its position that capacity-building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the Regular Budget.

6. The Group takes note of the report of the Advisory Group at its Fiftieth Session and its recommendations. The Group reiterates its appreciation to the efforts and expertise of the Advisory Group in providing necessary observations, conclusions and recommendations on issues related to the associated administrative and budgetary and financial matters.

Madam Chairperson,

7. The Group takes note of the initial draft 2019 Budget Update Proposals, as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1441, and welcomes your efforts in convening informal consultations. The Group in its statement at the last WGA session has clearly expressed its principled positions and views as well as sought further clarifications on the initial Budget Update Proposals. The Group urges the PTS, in the preparation of the programme and budget proposals, to take into account the following key principle positions:

-7.1 The importance of promoting a balanced approach and appropriate allocation of resources among the three pillars of the verification regime, namely, the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre and On-Site Inspection;

- 7.2 The importance of ensuring that any savings or reprioritization of resources won't jeopardize the efforts by the PTS towards the effective strengthening of capacity-building and training activities, which aim at increasing the capabilities of States Signatories to participate in the verification regime.

8. The Group takes note of the 2017 Human Resources Management Report and of the document entitled Equal Employment Opportunities Women in The Provisional Technical Secretariat. In this regard, the Group reaffirms its principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the staff of the Organization, particularly, at the Professional and higher levels, as important considerations in the recruitment process. The Group requests the PTS, under the leadership of the Director of Human Resources, to continue its effort to improve the representation of staff in the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) in accordance with the above-mentioned principles and to issue the related documents for consideration of States Signatories in a timely manner.

9. On the accession of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), the Group takes note of the recommendations of the WGA and the Advisory Group on this issue and looks forward to reaching a decision in this regard. The Group would also like to stress the importance of having a well-defined strategy for the transitional period as well as regular reports by the PTS on the implementation and its implications to the human resource management, should the accession to the UNJSPF be so decided by the Commission, in order to guarantee the interest and acquired rights of all staff and to avoid any liabilities to States Signatories.

10. The Group welcomes the inclusion of item 10 entitled "Developing guidelines for holding extraordinary session of the Preparatory Commission", as part of the Agenda of the present meeting. The Group looks forward to discuss these guidelines in order to reach consensus.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.