



**G-77 and China statement during the fifty-fifth session of Working Group A,
27-29 May 2019, to be delivered by H.E. Ambassador Omar Amer Youssef,
Permanent Representative of Egypt**

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank you, Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano, for chairing this meeting, in the absence of the Chair of Working Group A and also assure you of our full cooperation and support.
2. The Group avails itself of this opportunity to thank Ambassador Lotfi Bouchaara, for his dedication and efforts as Chairperson of the Working Group A.
3. The Group would also like to thank Dr. Lassina Zerbo for his opening remarks. The Group takes note of the Executive Secretary's report on verification related activities for the period July to December 2018, the Annual report 2018 and the report on non-verification related activities of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) from January to March 2019. The Group also thanks the PTS for preparing the documents for this session, and would like to reaffirm again the importance for States Signatories to receive all the documents well in advance of the sessions of the Preparatory Commission and its subsidiary bodies, no later than 4 weeks before the corresponding sessions, as well as in time for the meetings of the Advisory Group.
4. The Group welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by the Republic of Zimbabwe, which brings the total number of ratifications to 168. We believe that these developments represent significant steps towards the Universalization of the Treaty. The Group stresses the need of an early entry into force of the CTBT, with the ultimate goal to eliminate nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. Regarding agenda item 3, the Group takes note of the report of the Advisory Group at its 52nd session and the recommendations contained therein.
6. The Group welcomes the unqualified opinion of the External Auditor and seizes this opportunity to express its appreciation for the work done by the Auditor General of the State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand.
7. The Group takes note of the draft 2020-2021 Programme and Budget Proposal, as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1491. The Group would like to reiterate some of its earlier position and make the following comments:
 - (a) The Group thanks the Working Group A Chairperson for convening the Informal consultations in this regards, and requests the PTS to provide further clarification on Budget Drivers.
 - (b) The Group reiterates the importance of ensuring that any savings do not jeopardize the effective strengthening of capacity building and training activities.

(c) The Group strongly underlines the importance of promoting a balanced approach and appropriate allocation of resources among the three dimensions of the verification regime namely the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre and On-Site Inspection.

Mr. Chairperson,

8. Regarding Agenda item 14 “Consideration of the functioning of the Advisory Group”, the Group appreciates the document prepared by the Chair of Working Group A and considers it an appropriate basis on which to start discussions. The Group recognizes that the document has incorporated important elements presented by the Group of 77 and China as well as by other delegations and strives to find commonalities that may lead us to consensus.

9. In this regard, the Group would like to reiterate the inputs provided by the G-77 and China during the Informal consultations:

(a) Recognizing the general satisfaction of the States Signatories with the work of the Advisory Group in its current format, and taking into consideration the technical nature of the work of the Advisory Group, any discussion on the functioning of the Advisory Group should not undermine the nature and the work of the Preparatory Commission and its subsidiary bodies. The functioning of the Advisory Group should remain in full compliance with the resolution that established the Preparatory Commission, its Rules of Procedure and the Financial Rules and Regulations, and in line with the objectives and purposes of the CTBT.

(b) Regarding the composition, each and every State Signatory should have the right to nominate candidates for the Advisory Group, and no discrimination shall be made between State Signatories, in line with rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure, regardless of their ratification status or financial situation.

(c) The Group wishes to state that regarding the nomination of the members of the Advisory Group, the sovereign right of States signatories to nominate their own candidates to the Advisory Group should be fully respected. In this context, no measure should hamper the participation of States signatories, particularly developing countries, in the Advisory Group.

(d) In that order of ideas, any possible modifications regarding the functioning of the Advisory Group should not have any retroactive effects on the current rights and responsibilities of the current or past members of the Advisory Group.

Mr. Chairman,

10. On the accession of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), the Group takes note that as of 1 January 2019, all but 11 staff members are now participants in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). The Group requests the PTS to report regularly to States signatories on the process of post accession of the PrepCom to the Pension Fund and its implications.

11. On the 2018 Human Resources Management Report, after preliminary analysis the Group would like to reaffirm 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 appreciates the information provided in table 3.2 of Annex 3, regarding the professional fixed-term staff members of the Group of 77 and China, while concerned with the low level of representation of the Group.

12. The Group also takes note of the efforts made to improve the representation of the staff, including the achievement of gender balance at the director level of the PTS, and requests the PTS to make further efforts to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the staff of the organization at all levels of responsibility.

13. The Group looks forward to a constructive deliberation and timely conclusion of the work of this Working Group.

14. Finally, the Group looks forward to the 2019 CTBT Science and Technology Conference to be held in Vienna next month. Our Group will be significantly active in this event, through the participation of scientists, experts, diplomats and authorities. We reiterate our full support for the Conference and look forward to its report in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.