



**STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FIFTY-FIFTH
SESSION OF WORKING GROUP A, 28-30 OCTOBER 2019,
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR OMAR AMER YOUSSEF,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT**

Madam Chairperson,

1. At the outset, the Group avails itself of this opportunity to welcome, H.E. Ambassador Ms. Nada Kruger, as Chairperson of the Working Group A and to assure you of its full cooperation and support.
2. 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 non-verification related activities from April to August 2019. The Group would also like to extend its appreciation to the PTS for the timely issuance of the documents.
3. The Group wishes to highlight that since the last ratification by the Republic of Zimbabwe, which brought the total number of ratifications to 168, no other developments in this area have been observed. We strongly believe that more and stronger efforts should be undertaken to achieve the universality 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.
4. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the eleventh conference on facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, which took place in New York on 25 September 2019 and takes note of the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Conference. The Group appreciates the efforts undertaken by Algeria and Germany as co-facilitators, and thanks the PTS for organizing this event.

Madam Chairperson,

5. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the recent report of the Advisory Group, and the recommendations contained therein especially recommendation to the Executive Secretary to consider providing information on the financial implications of possible modifications to the staff service limitation policy of the Commission.
6. The Group acknowledges that the Advisory Group (AG) took note of the decision of the Commission at its Fifty-Second Session on procedures for the appointment of members of the AG, and reviewed and agreed on changes to its rules of procedure as contained in Annex III to its report.

Madam Chairperson,

7. The Group takes note of the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget Proposals: Initial Draft dated 19 March 2019 and 24 May 2019 and its revision on 8 August 2019, which incorporates views expressed during the Fifty-Fifth Session of WGA and the Fifty-Second Session of the Commission.
8. 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, as well as allocating sufficient and predictable resources to improve the capacity-building and training activities of States Signatories, in particular developing countries.
9. Regarding the cash surplus of the 2016/2017 budget, the Group stresses that any decision to surrender the cash surplus as a voluntary contribution must reflect a balance between the priorities of different States Signatories. In this regard, any such decision must ensure the allocation of appropriate resources to capacity-building to support efforts to expand the engagement of different States Signatures, and in particular developing countries, in capacity-building activities.

Madam Chairperson,

10. On Human Resources Management, 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.
11. The Group 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.
12. Finally, the Group looks forward to a constructive deliberation and timely conclusion of the work of this Working Group.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.