



**G-77 and China statement during the 53rd session of Working Group B,
26 August – 6 September 2019 to be delivered by H.E. Ambassador Omar Amer
Youssef, Permanent Representative of Egypt**

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Dr. Joachim Schulze, conducting our work in this 52nd Session of Working Group B together with the Vice-Chairs and Task Leaders, and would like to assure you of its full cooperation and support.
2. The Group wishes to congratulate the Vice-Chairs for their reappointment.
3. We would also like to thank Dr. Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary, for his opening remarks and take note of his report on verification related activities for the period from July to December 2018. The Group also takes note of the documents prepared for this session and appreciates the Provisional Technical Secretariat's (PTS) efforts in making them available.

Mr. Chairman,

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.
5. The Group reiterates its principle position on the importance of sustaining a balanced approach, including in allocating resources and time, among the three Major Programmes of the verification regime, namely the International Monitoring System (IMS), the International Data Centre (IDC) and On-Site Inspection (OSI). To this end, it calls once more on the PTS to seek the necessary efficiencies in the process, to ensure that the verification regime of the Treaty, upon entry into force, is balanced, coherent, as well as robust while efficient.
6. On specific verification related activities conducted by the PTS, as contained in the Executive Secretary's report, the Group would like to make the following remarks:
 - (a) The Group notes the continuous progress, as reported by the PTS, on the joint efforts of the States hosting IMS facilities local operator and the PTS, under the provisional operational nature of the IMS. The Group also notes that the data availability of certified IMS stations remained high and the timeliness requirements for Reviewed products met more than 99%.

- (b) Regarding the IMS, the Group takes note of the activities undertaken by the PTS during the reporting period, in particular the progress achieved regarding the installations and certification of remaining Stations in developing countries, namely Thailand and Niger, which illustrates the strong political commitment and material contributions of developing countries.
 - (c) On the management of life-cycle costs, including post-certification activity (PCA) contracts for certified IMS stations, the Group takes note of the continuous efforts by the PTS to standardize the services provided under PCA contracts and encourages all States Signatories to continue to cooperate with the PTS in a joint effort to lower life cycle costs including those related to PCA.
 - (d) The Group takes note of the report on Experiment 3 and welcomes the involvement by State Signatories in the overall process. In this regard, the Group reiterates the importance of continued participation and oversight of the IDC Commissioning Plan by States Signatories.
 - (e) While appreciating the PTS for its activities with regard to the IDC progressive commissioning and taking into account the findings contained in the technical report of Experiment 3, and the results, shortcomings and lessons learned identified therein, the Group requests the PTS to provide the evaluation report of this experiment, for its review and consideration by the WGB.
7. The Group would like to highlight the importance of capacity building activities, especially through technical trainings, workshops and capacity building courses, and expresses its appreciation for the PTS's efforts in this regard. We reaffirm the continuing need for cooperation and support, including the provision of technical assistance to, inter alia, enhance the capacities of States Signatories', in particular developing countries, to effectively participate in the verification regime of the Treaty, and implement obtained knowledge and capacities in the national, regional and international level.
 8. As part of its integrated capacity building activities, the Commission has to continue offering States Signatories, in particular developing States, a wide range of training courses and workshops aimed at strengthening capacities in areas relevant to the Treaty. Capacity building activities should also include the provision of hardware and software to NDCs, especially those in developing countries, enabling them to access and analyze IMS data and International Data Centre (IDC) products.
 9. The Group takes note of the first draft of the Multi-year Programme and Action Plan for Capacity Building and Training 2020-2021. In this regard, the Group reiterates the importance of providing an Action Plan, which includes regional and multi-lingual dimensions, in a structured manner and in a project based approach that incorporates clear targets and performance assessment mechanisms, while including the lessons learned from the implementation of the current Action Plan.
 10. The Group expresses its support for the pilot project, which facilitates the participation of experts from developing countries in the WGB sessions. The Group is convinced that such participation will greatly contribute to capacity building in our countries.

11. We welcome the significant work that has been undertaken to update procurement documentation and procedures and streamline processes, as well as to continue on the work on refining SAP configurations for maximum efficiency and transparency.
12. The Group takes note of the 2017 CTBT Science and Technology Conference report and requests the PTS to provide the report of the subsequent conferences in a more timely manner.
13. As with regard to OSI Action Plan 2016-2019, the G-77 and China notes that 26 projects were under implementation and 17 were completed as of December 2018. The Group would like to reiterate its request to the PTS to provide Technical reports of the implementation of the completed projects and with the opportunity for the dedicated Expert Meetings to consider these reports. We also look forward to the completion of the Permanent Equipment Storage and Maintenance Facility (ESMF) and request the relevant technical reports, with opportunity for the dedicated Expert Meetings to consider them.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Group reaffirms its principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance and reiterates that these principles should be reflected in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies. In this regard, we encourage Working Group B to contribute to improving such representation among its officers in accordance with the above-mentioned principles.
15. Finally, the Group looks forward to continue working constructively with you, the Vice-Chairs and the Task Leaders in order to achieve a fruitful outcome of this session.

Thank you.