



**G-77 and China statement during the 54th session of Working Group B,
17 – 28 February 2020, delivered by
H. E. Ambassador Ganeson Sivagurunathan,
Permanent Representative of Malaysia**

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Dr. Joachim Schulze, conducting our work in this 54th 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. 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 2019. The Group also takes note of the documents prepared for this session by the Provisional Technical Secretariat's (PTS).

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group stresses the need of all possible efforts to achieve the universalization of the Treaty. The Group also 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. The Group reiterates its principled 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.

Mr. Chairman,

5. 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, within the provisional operational nature of the IMS, as reported by the PTS, on the joint efforts of the States hosting IMS facilities local operator and the PTS. 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, which illustrates the strong political commitment and material contributions of developing countries to the work of this Organization.

- 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 reiterates its call on all States Signatories to cooperate with the PTS in a joint effort to lower life cycle costs, including those related to PCA.
 - d. The Group would like to affirm that any activities related to the funding, maintenance, and provisional operation of the IMS stations by the PTS, and any related action or decision by the Prepcom, must respect the territorial integrity of states.
 - e. Regarding the International Data Center Progressive Commissioning, the Group takes note of Experiment 4 conducted from 16-27 September 2019, including the participation of experts from developing countries, and would like to emphasize the importance of continued involvement of experts in conducting the experiments. We look forward to further briefings on the progressive commissioning of the IMS and the IDC, the validation and acceptance test plan and the experiments conducted and planned by the PTS. Noting that the milestones for progressive commission are not time bound and are requirement-based.
 - f. The Group believes that appropriate time should be allocated for implementing the recommendations emanating from the first round of experiments. The Group also believes that Working Group B should have enough time to consider the relevant reports and recommendations of the first round in order to effectively evaluate the technical needs and specifications of the second round tests.
 - g. The Group takes note with appreciation of the progress made under the OSI action plan for 2016-2019, that successfully completed all 43 projects at the end of 2019.
 - h. We welcome the efforts by the PTS to detect the problems in on-site inspection in challenging environments, and the OSI Workshop-24 as a starting point in this area. During the Workshop, challenges regarding issues such as search logic, effectiveness of techniques, functional capability of inspectors, equipment specifications and related provisions in the draft OSI Operational Manual were identified. As the current process for eliminating deficiencies has focused more on shallow underground tests under mild environmental conditions, the group requests the PTS to address the above-mentioned issues.
6. We take note of the information by which the Executive Secretary reports of the build-up of two IMS stations and one IMS radionuclide laboratory during July-December 2019 in Argentina, Niger, and South Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

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, ensure that all States Signatories, in particular developing countries, have the capacity to effectively participate in the verification regime of the Treaty, and implement obtained knowledge and capacities in the national, regional and international level.
8. The Group expresses its support for the pilot project, which facilitates the participation of experts from developing countries in the WGB sessions, which resulted in the selection of six new experts from Libya, Mexico, Namibia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan. The Group is convinced that such participation will greatly contribute to capacity building in our countries.
9. As part of its integrated capacity building activities, the Group encourages the PTS to focus on the role of younger generations, including full engagement with experienced scientists. The Group stresses that the Commission should offer 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.

Mr. Chairman,

10. 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.
11. 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.