



**G-77 and China statement during the 57<sup>th</sup> session of Working Group A,  
1 – 2 June 2020 delivered by  
H. E. Ambassador Ganeson Sivagurunathan,  
Permanent Representative of Malaysia**

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China is deeply saddened by the loss of so many lives globally due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and expresses its solidarity with all countries as they battle with the effects of the pandemic. Cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat the pandemic, including through a multilateral approach, should be strengthened and intensified. The Group welcomes the Organization's business continuity, flow of data and data products despite restrictions caused by Covid-19 and express its gratitude for the efforts of the PTS in this regard.
2. The Group takes into account the ends of term of the Executive Secretary, the Chair of the Working Group B and members of the Advisory Group, and would like to assure the Chair of its readiness to support efforts in the Preparatory Commission to reach conclusion of these matters.
3. The Group is of the view that, this is a time for the international community, to demonstrate its capability to work together in solidarity to mitigate the impacts of COVID19. The international community must unite in its efforts to ensure access to scientific guidance, training, equipment, essential medical supplies, and concrete life-saving services to countries in greatest need and in regions where the full impact is yet to be felt.
4. The Group considers that at this juncture cooperation and solidarity should prevail among nations, and calls upon countries to ensure that their measures will not have a negative impact on the capacity of States to respond efficiently to COVID 19.
5. The Group would like to thank Ambassador Nada Kruger, for chairing the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of Working Group A. The Group takes this opportunity to renew to you, Ambassador, the assurances of its full support and cooperation.
6. The Group would also like to thank Dr. Lassina Zerbo for his opening remarks. The Group takes note of the Report of the Executive Secretary on verification related activities for the period July to December 2019, the Annual Report 2019 and the Report of the Executive Secretary on non-verification-related activities for the period January to March 2020.
7. The Group would also like to express its appreciation to the PTS for preparing the documents. The Group would like to reaffirm 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.

Madam Chairperson,

8. As we are facing a unique situation, given the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the issues that should get priority in virtual meetings include the meetings that will make decisions on the administrative and financial aspects for the PTS to be able to fulfil its mandate.
9. The Group takes note of the recent report of the Advisory Group at its 54th session and appreciates the recommendations contained therein.
10. 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.

Madam Chairperson,

11. The Group takes note of the 2018-2019 Programme and Budget Performance Report provided by the PTS. The Group also takes note of the 2021 budget proposal: initial draft dated on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, which proposes updates to the 2021 preliminary budget estimates of the approved 2020 – 2021 Programme and Budget, and would like to reiterate some of its earlier positions and make the following comments:
  - a. The Group appreciates the reprioritization of saving by the PTS, but would like to reiterate the importance of implementing a balance between the priorities of different States Signatories and not jeopardizing the efforts towards effectively strengthening capacity building and training activities.
  - b. The Group reiterates its position that capacity building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the Regular Budget.
  - c. The Group notes that some capacity building activities, including workshop and training, technical expert meetings, seminars and symposiums, was postponed due to COVID-19. The Group would like to highlight that those activities should be rescheduled as soon as circumstances allow.
12. The Group supports and appreciates the Commission's continued efforts to mobilize additional voluntary contributions for experts from developing countries to participate in official technical meetings of the Commission, and to ensure the rotation of the experts supported under this project, and encourages that this mobilization be maintained.
13. 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.

Madam Chairperson,

14. The Group encourages the PTS to continue its efforts to improve the representation of staff as well as gender balance in the PTS.
15. Finally, the Group looks forward to constructive deliberations and a timely conclusion of the tasks of this Working Group.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.