



**G-77 and China Statement during the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Preparatory Commission, 25 - 26 June 2020  
delivered by H. E. Ambassador Ganeson Sivagurunathan,  
Permanent Representative of Malaysia**

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see you, Ambassador Faouzia Mebarki, chairing the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Preparatory Commission. The Group takes this opportunity to renew to you, Ambassador, the assurances of its full support and cooperation.
2. 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, including the nominations for appointment and reappointment of the Directors of the PTS.
3. The Group also thanks the Chair for conducting informal consultations in preparation for the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Preparatory Commission. The Group would like to reaffirm the importance for State Signatories to receive all the documents well in advance of the sessions of the Preparatory Commission and all other subsidiary bodies, no later than four weeks before the corresponding sessions.
4. 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 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.
5. The Group supports efforts to ensure business continuity in the CTBTO Prepcom and also expresses gratitude to the PTS of all its efforts amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Group would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the exceptional nature of the current session of the Commission, including the abbreviated agenda and virtual format, must not set a precedent for future sessions, nor be considered as an amendment to existing rules, norms or practices. The Group also highlights that the postponement of substantive discussions on a number of issues that were scheduled for this session is a one-time measure necessitated by unprecedented circumstances, and that postponed discussions and decisions, that were scheduled to take place at the 54<sup>th</sup> session, must now take place at the upcoming 55<sup>th</sup> session of the Prepcom, as a matter of priority.
6. The Group wishes to reiterate its full support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and stresses the need for an early entry into force of the CTBT, with the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Group notes that there has not been further development since ratification by the Republic of

Zimbabwe in February 2019, which brought the total number of ratifying countries to 168. The Group stresses the need for all possible efforts to achieve the universality of the Treaty.

7. The Group expresses its deep concern on recent reports of the possible planning and preparation for nuclear test explosions by State Signatories. Any nuclear tests explosion, if carried out, would not only break the global moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions, but severely undermine the Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and international peace and security. The Group calls upon all of the States to observe nuclear test moratoria and to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to general and complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.
8. On Agenda item 3, the Group takes note of the report of Working Group A at its 57<sup>th</sup> session and its recommendations. We would like to thank the Chairperson of WGA, Ambassador Nada Kruger of Namibia, for leading the consultations that preceded the session, as well as for all her efforts in conducting the first virtual WGA meeting in order to achieve consensus despite challenges and difficulties caused by the pandemic.
9. The Group would like to reiterate some points expressed in the Working Group that decisions on financial matters should implement a balance between priorities of different State Signatories and not jeopardize the efforts towards effectively strengthening capacity building and training activities. Capacity building activities should also be funded sufficiently through the Regular Budget. In addition, those capacity building activities postponed due to COVID-19 should be rescheduled as soon as circumstances allow.
10. The Group looks forward to deliberation of the 2021 Budget update proposals and the remaining agenda of the 57<sup>th</sup> session which are incorporated in the Fifty-Eighth Session of Working Group A.
11. The Group also takes note of the report of the Working Group B at its Fifty-Fourth Session and thanks Mr. Joachim Schulze for the introduction of the report.
12. The Group strongly emphasizes the importance it attaches to capacity-building and training and to the various activities carried out by the PTS in this field as a means of improving the ability of States Signatories, in particular developing countries, to fully participate in the Treaty's verification regime.
13. The Group takes note of the update on Current PTS led training activities relevant to the National Data Center staff and capacity building, and emphasizes the importance of geographical and gender representation in training and capacity building activities as well as workshops and expert meetings.
14. The Group takes note of the recent report of the Advisory Group at its 54th session and appreciates the recommendations contained therein. The Group also reiterates its appreciation for the efforts and expertise of the Advisory Group in providing necessary observation, conclusion, and recommendations on issues related to the associated administrative, budgetary and financial matters.

15. Taking into account the ends of term of the Executive Secretary, the Chairperson of the Working Group B and members of the Advisory Group, the G-77 and China would like to assure the Chair of its readiness to support efforts in the Preparatory Commission to reach conclusion of these matters. The Group expresses thanks to the Chair of the PrepCom for her extensive consultations on all the aforementioned items and looks forward to her report of progress on all of them respectively.
16. The Group reiterates that the Vienna spirit and the principle of consensus should prevail in any decision-making process.
17. Concerning the election and appointment of the Executive Secretary, The Group believes that the inclusive participation of all State Signatories in the election process is essential for the legitimacy of the entire process.
18. The Group would like to call attention to paragraph 5-b of the Annex to the Resolution establishing the Preparatory Commission (CTBT/MSS/RES/1) which states that the commission may permit Members to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Members. The Group is of the view that the extraordinary circumstances occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, in which many State Signatories are confronted by debilitating economic uncertainties, may warrant the invocation of the provisions of paragraph 5-b.
19. 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. The Group takes this opportunity to continue encouraging the Executive Secretary in his efforts to significantly improve the gender balance and the equitable geographical distribution within the organization and at all levels of responsibility, bearing in mind the persistent underrepresentation of developing countries in the staff composition of the PTS, and the need to take appropriate measures to address this issue.
20. The Group looks forward to finalizing guidelines for holding extraordinary sessions of the Commission, as well as finalizing direct and clear guidance for noble gas background characterization, at the soonest in-person session of the Commission, as a matter of priority. In this regard, the Group stresses that the postponement of the deadlines for those decisions is directly linked to the temporary changes in the format and modality of meetings of the Prepcom in light of the COVID-19 crisis.
21. Finally, the Group looks forward to a constructive deliberation and timely conclusion of the work of this Session of the Preparatory Commission.

Thank you, Madam Chair.