



**G-77 and China statement during the 58th session of Working Group A
28 – 30 October 2020 delivered by H. E. Ambassador Maria Cleofe Natividad,
Permanent Representative of the Philippines**

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Ambassador Ganeson Sivagurunathan, for chairing the 58th Session of Working Group A. The Group takes this opportunity to renew to you, Ambassador, the assurances of its full support and cooperation.
2. The Group 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.
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 COVID-19. 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 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 consensual conclusion of these matters.
6. The Group would also like to thank the Executive Secretary, Dr Lassina Zerbo, for his opening remarks and takes note of his reports on the non-verification related activities for the period of April to August 2020. The Group would also to extend its appreciation to the PTS for the timely issuance of the documents.
7. The Group wishes to reiterate our observation that since the last ratification by the Republic of Zimbabwe in February 2019, which brought the total number of ratification 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.
8. 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.

Mr. Chair,

9. The Group takes note on the report of the Fifty-fifth Session of the Advisory Group and appreciate the efforts and expertise of the Advisory Group in providing observations, conclusions and recommendations to Working Group A and the PTS on issues related to the associated administrative, budgetary and financial matters. The Group congratulates Mr. Pedro Alexandre Penha Brasil of Brazil for his appointment as the vice-chair of the Advisory Group. The Group also congratulates the newly appointed and reappointed members of the Advisory Group.

10. 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 proposals, which proposes updates to the 2021 preliminary budget estimates of the approved 2020 – 2021 Programme and Budget, and would like to reiterate the following comments:

a. The Group appreciates the efforts made by the PTS, which are aimed at identifying and implementing measures to increase efficiency and savings to the extent possible of the 2021 budget proposal. The Group also welcomes the PTS' continued integrated approach to capacity building and training activities to increase synergy, effectiveness and efficiency.

b. The Group would like to stress that while calling for a balanced approach to develop and allocate resources among all elements of the verification regime of the Treaty, the Group reiterates its position that capacity-building activities should be funded in a sufficient manner through the Regular Budget and that these saving should not compromise the efforts towards effectively strengthening capacity building and training activities for developing countries.

c. The Group takes note of the decision on the carry forward of the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) and Multiyear Funds unspent balances of 31 December 2020 to the financial period 2021, as soon as they are audited and approved.

11. The Group takes note that some workshop, training and exercises towards capacity building activities, 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 pilot 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. The Group further underlines the importance of the allocation of sufficient and predictable resources to improve the capacity building and training activities of State Signatories, in particular developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

14. On Human Resources Management, the Group takes note of the efforts made to improve the representation of the staff, and 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, particularly, at the Professional and higher levels, as important considerations in the recruitment process. The Group further underlines the persistent underrepresentation of developing countries in the staff composition of the PTS, and the need to take appropriate measures to address this issue. The Group encourages the PTS to continue its efforts to improve the representation of staff in the Provisional Technical Secretariat, in accordance with the above principles.

15. The Group looks forward to NDC Capacity Building Workshop and Regional Seismic Travel Time (RSTT) in Combination with Data Sharing and Integration Training for the Middle East and South Asia Region (MESA) in Muscat, Oman on 15-19 November 2020. The Group also looks forward to the 2021 CTBT Science and Technology Conference to be held in Vienna in June next year which aims to identify opportunities and possible solutions to continuously improve nuclear test monitoring and verification, and to promote the wider civil and scientific applications of techniques and data used for test ban verification, among other goals. Our Group will be significantly active in this event, through the participation of scientists, experts, diplomats and authorities. We reiterate our full support for the Conference.

16. Finally, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to constructive deliberations and a timely conclusion of the tasks of this Working Group.

Thank you Mr. Chair.