



Statement of the Group of 77 and China during the 59th Session of the Preparatory Commission, 21 – 23 November 2022, delivered by H.E. Azzeddine Farhane, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Morocco

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group is pleased to see you, Ambassador Darío Ernesto Chirú Ochoa, chairing the 59th Session of the Preparatory Commission (PrepCom). The Group takes this opportunity to renew to you, Ambassador, its full support and cooperation. Furthermore, the Group expresses its reassurances to the PrepCom in executing its tasks in the most efficient and effective manner.

2. The Group would also like to thank the Executive Director for his opening remarks, takes note of his reports and expresses its appreciation to the Provisional Technical Secretariat for preparing documents and making them available for this session in a timely manner.

3. 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. COVID-19 showed that new challenges have global effects which require universal coordinated response that necessitates cooperation in all domains among all States to contain, mitigate and defeat the pandemic, through a multilateral approach.

Mr. Chair,

4. The Group is pleased to note that since our meeting of June, four countries, all from the G-77, namely, Dominica, Timor-Leste, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe, have ratified the CTBT, bringing the number of State Signatories to 186 and of Ratifiers to 176. The Group stresses the need for an early Entry Into Force of the CTBT and underlines the importance of all possible efforts to be made to achieve the universalization of the Treaty, with the ultimate goal to eliminate nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control

5. The Group takes note of the statement of the Executive Secretary at the 10th NPT Review Conference in New York. The Group would like to highlight the inextricable link between the CTBT and the NPT as mutually reinforcing legal instruments of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We reaffirm the role of the NPT and the CTBT in furthering nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament both vertical and horizontal.

6. The Group continues to express its concern on any possible planning and preparation for nuclear test explosions. Any nuclear tests explosion would not only break the global moratorium, but severely undermine the Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and international peace and security. The Group calls upon all States to observe nuclear test moratoria and to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to general, complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Chair,

7. On Agenda item 3, the Group takes note of the report of Working Group A at the 62nd session thanks the Ambassador Nguyen Trung Kien of Viet Nam for presenting the report.

8. The Group would like to reiterate some points expressed during the last Working Group A session. In this regard:

(a) The Group welcomes the efforts of the PTS in mitigating the impact of the high inflation rate through combination of the identified savings and efficiencies with the higher estimate of miscellaneous income leading to a reduction in the total amount of the 2023 contributions from State Signatories.

(b) While appreciating the efforts of the PTS in identifying and implementing measures to increase efficiency and savings to the extent possible, the Group reiterates the importance of ensuring that any savings do not jeopardize the effective strengthening of capacity building and training activities, nor affects the quality of these capacity building activities. The Group further requests the PTS to provide a detailed report on planned savings and efficiencies for 2023 and projected savings and efficiencies in preparation for the 2024-2025 biennium by the 63rd WGA session.

(c) 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.

(d) While appreciating the efforts made by the PTS, which are aimed at identifying and implementing measures to increase efficiency and savings to the extent possible, the Group reiterates the importance of ensuring that any savings do not jeopardize the effective strengthening of capacity building and training activities, nor affects the quality of these capacity building activities which aim at increasing the capabilities of States Signatories to participate in the verification regime.

(e) The Group notes the progress with regards to making a large proportion of the training modules available in all United Nations official languages. The Group reiterates the importance of the allocation of resources for a project-based action plan that includes regional and multilingual dimensions, as well as assessment mechanisms, as was previously requested by the Working Group (B) of the Preparatory Commission at its 52nd Session (CTBT/PC-52/WGB/1).

(f) The Group takes note that some technical meetings, workshops, training courses and exercises towards capacity building activities, were postponed due to COVID-19. The Group however expresses its concern that the implementation rate of the Capacity-Building Fund remains low. In this regard, the Group calls on the PTS to implement necessary measures to rectify this anomaly and bring capacity building activities to required levels.

Mr Chair,

9. On agenda item 4, the Group also takes note of the report of the Working Group B at its 59th Session and thanks Dr. Erlan Batyrbekov for presenting the report. In this regard:

(a) 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, as well as dedicating adequate financial resources for these activities.

(b) The Group expresses its support for initiatives, such as the pilot project, that facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries in the WGB sessions, as well as the National Data Centers for All (NDCs4All) Initiative. The Group is convinced that such participation will greatly contribute to capacity-building in our countries and to achieving

wider participation of all States Signatories in the decision-making process and ownership of the Commission.

(c) Reaffirming the provisions of the Establishing Resolution and the independent nature of the Prepcom, the Group would like to reaffirm that any activities related to the funding, maintenance, and provisional operation of the IMS stations must respect the mandate of the PTS, and any related action or decision by the Prepcom, should fully respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including those on the territorial integrity of the States. In view of this, the Group highlights the importance to engage in construction, maintenance and/or relocation of IMS facilities fully in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

10. On agenda item 5, the Group takes note of the report of the Advisory Group at its 59th session and the recommendations contained therein. The Group appreciates the Advisory Group's efforts and expertise in providing necessary observations, conclusions and recommendations on issues related to the administrative, budgetary and financial matters.

Mr Chair,

11. The Group reaffirms its principles of equitable geographical distribution, gender balance and multilingualism. The Group reiterates that these principles should be reflected in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies, as well as in the PTS. In this regard, the Group is concerned that geographical, gender representation and women participation at the Professional and higher levels remains low. The Group takes this opportunity to continue requesting the Executive Secretary to significantly improve geographical, gender representation, and women participation within the Organization and at all levels of responsibility, using new and existing tools 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.

12. The Group emphasizes the importance of promoting multilingualism in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies as well as in the PTS. The Group requests the PTS to report on progress made at its 60th session.

13. Recognizing the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, the Group affirms the paramount importance of youth participation in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies, as well as in the PTS activities.

14. The Group welcomes the preparations for the Science Diplomacy Symposium, as well as Snt2023 and notes that these events are effective platforms for exchange of knowledge and ideas between the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO and the broader scientific and diplomatic communities.

15. The Group also recalls the guidelines contained within document CTBT/PTS-INF.1635 and encourages the PTS to coordinate with the other Secretariats of the Vienna based International Organizations (VBOs), to ensure that major meetings do not coincide, as well as to avoid an overlap, to the extent possible, with major sessions of the VBOs and any major public holiday.

16. The Group looks forward to finalizing direct and clear guidance for noble gas background characterization, as a matter of priority at the next in person session of the PrepCom. In this connection, the Group appreciates the work carried out by the previous Co-facilitators Ambassador Molekane of South Africa and Ambassador Lagner of Switzerland. The Group expects the PTS to act in accordance with its mandate and stresses that the

postponement of the deadline for this decision is directly linked to the temporary changes in the format and modality of meetings of the PrepCom in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

17. The Group looks forward to finalizing guidelines for holding non-scheduled sessions of the Commission and takes note of the latter's proposal on the matter. The Group appreciates the work carried out by Ambassador Carlos Sérgio Sobral Duarte from Brazil, as facilitator. The Group remains ready to engage in these consultations.

18. Finally, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to a constructive deliberation and timely conclusion of the work of this Session of the Preparatory Commission.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.