



**Statement of the Group of 77 and China  
during the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Preparatory Commission  
13 – 15 November 2023**

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group is pleased to see you, Ambassador Benno Laggner, chairing the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Preparatory Commission (PrepCom). The Group takes this opportunity to express its full support and cooperation to your chairmanship.
2. The Group would also like to thank the Executive Secretary for his opening remarks and 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.

Mr. Chair,

3. The Group is pleased to note that since our last meeting, Sri Lanka, has ratified and Somalia has signed the Treaty, bringing the number of States Signatories to 187 and of Ratifiers to 178. In this regard, 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.
4. In this regard, the Group expresses its appreciation for the outcome of the 13th session of Art. XIV Conference, under the Co-Presidency of Panama and Norway, that took place in New York on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.
5. The Group would like to reiterate that the CTBT and the NPT are mutually reinforcing legal instruments of the international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. We reaffirm the central role of the NPT, as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the envisaged role of the CTBT, in furthering nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation both vertical and horizontal.
6. The Group continues to express its serious 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. (*Agreed ad ref*)

Mr. Chair,

7. On Agenda item 3, the Group takes note of the report of Working Group A at the 64<sup>th</sup> session and thanks Ambassador Nguyen Trung Kien of Viet Nam for presenting the report. The Group wishes to thank him for all his efforts and exemplary leadership of Working Group A from June 2022 until December 2023.

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

(a) The Group takes note of the 2024 – 2025 Programme and Budget Proposal, as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.1647/Rev.1. The Group appreciates the efforts of the PTS in preparing this budget, cognizant of the view of the Group.

(b) The Group reiterates its request for the PTS to maintain a zero percent real growth policy in preparing future budgets. Additionally, we request the PTS to maintain its efforts to keep a minimal price adjustment and identify means to ensure that financial resources are put to best use. In this regard, we note that the difficult global macroeconomic circumstances continues to have a substantial impact on developing states, adding to the pertinent financial burdens and posing new challenges.

(c) In that regard, 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 projected savings and efficiencies in preparation for future budgets.

(d) The Group strongly underlines the importance of promoting a balanced approach and equitable allocation of resources among the three dimensions of the verification regime namely the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre and On-Site Inspection.

(e) The Group notes the proposals on the use of the 2020-2021 cash surplus and welcomes the revised draft decision which accorded increased allocation to capacity building activities. The Group further calls on the PTS to utilize the cash surplus from the budget of 2020 - 2021, in a balanced manner among the three pillars of the verification regime to the extent possible, as well as adequate allocation for capacity building in line with previous similar decisions, and the inclusion of an opt-out provision in line with previous decisions.

(f) The Group reiterates that the cash surplus decision do not entail a position regarding the IMS sustainment strategy, yet to be concluded, and shall not constitute a precedent or additional financial burdens in preparing the next regular budget of the CTBTO, nor will it affect its baseline.

(g) 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.

(h) The Group appreciates the efforts of the PTS in providing records of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in all the official languages of the Commission on the ECS.

Mr Chair,

9. On agenda item 4, the Group also takes note of the report of the Working Group B at its 61<sup>st</sup> 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 Technical Experts Support Program (TESP) that facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries, as well as the National Data Center for All (NDCs4All), that allow access to secure signatory accounts among the three dimensions. . 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 61<sup>st</sup> session and the recommendations contained therein and thanks Ms. Rashmi RAJYAGURU for presenting the report. 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 and would like to emphasize the contribution of youth in promoting peace and security.

12. The Group remains seriously concerned with the low level of representation of developing countries in the PTS and requests the PTS to make all necessary efforts to bring geographical representation to equitable levels. In this regard, the Group recognizes the efforts made to improve the representation of the staff, including the achievement of gender balance at the director level of the PTS and encourages to continue improving gender representation at Professional level which

remains at 41%. The Group requests the PTS to make further efforts to achieve gender balance among the staff of the organization at all levels of responsibility. In this regard, we would like to propose the PTS to use new and existing tools to encourage the participation of young female professionals in the PTS.

13. The Group emphasizes the importance of promoting multilingualism in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies as well as in the PTS. The Group looks forward to receiving an update on this subject in this session and a written progress report in future sessions.

14. 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.

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 session of the PrepCom. The Group is confident that the PTS will continue to act in accordance with its mandate until this issue is finalized.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.