



**Statement of the G-77 and China  
during the 62nd Session of Working Group B,  
19 February – 1 March 2024  
delivered by H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hamdy Elmolla,  
Permanent Representative of Egypt**

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to begin by expressing its deepest condolences to the people of Chile over the loss of lives caused by recent natural disasters and the passing of the former president of Chile Sebastián Piñera. The Group would also like to express its heartfelt condolences to the Namibian people on the passing of their President, Dr. Hage G. Geingob and the Iranian people on the horrific attack in the city of Kerman.

2. The Group congratulates you, Dr. Erlan Batyrbekov, on your reappointment for a second term as Chairperson of Working Group B and is pleased to see you, conducting our work in this 62nd Session together with the Vice-Chairs and Task Leaders. The Group assures you of its full cooperation.

3. The Group congratulates H.E. Ambassador KAIFU Atsushi, Permanent Representative of Japan, on his election as Chairperson of the Preparatory Commission for the year 2024. The Group thanks H.E. Ambassador Benno Lagner, Permanent Representative of Switzerland, for chairing the Preparatory Commission during 2023.

4. The Group thanks Dr. Robert Floyd, the Executive Secretary, for his opening remarks and takes note of his report on verification related activities for the period from July to December 2023. We also take note of the documents prepared for this session by the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) and appreciate the PTS efforts in making them available. In this regard, we also consider that States Signatories would benefit from technical briefings on the reports submitted to policy-making organs.

Mr. Chair,

5. The Group reiterates its full support for the CTBT and stresses the need for an early Entry into Force of the Treaty and its universalization, with the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

6. The Science and Technology Conference is an effective platform for an exchange of knowledge and ideas with the broader scientific community. The Group takes note of the preliminary report of the 2023 Conference and looks forward to the final version.

7. The Group reiterates its principled position on the importance of sustaining a balanced approach, including in allocating resources and time, among the three Major Programmes of the verification regime, namely the International Monitoring System (IMS), the International Data Centre (IDC) and On-Site Inspection (OSI). To this end, it calls once more on the PTS to seek the necessary efficiencies in the process, to ensure that the verification regime of the Treaty, upon Entry into Force, is balanced, coherent, and robust while furthering its efficiency.

Mr. Chair,

8. On specific verification related activities conducted by the PTS, as contained in the Executive Secretary's report, the Group stresses the importance of the PTS conforming with its mandate and would like to make the following remarks:

a) The Group notes that the data availability of certified IMS stations remained high and automated products of the IDC met the timeliness requirements.

b) Regarding the IMS, the Group takes note of the activities undertaken by the PTS during the reporting period, in particular the progress achieved towards the installations and certification of remaining Stations in developing countries, which illustrates the strong political commitment and material contributions of developing countries to the work of this Organization. The Group further takes note that during the reporting period, the total number of installed stations and certified stations remain at 301 (93.8%) and 306 (90.8%) respectively.

c) On the management of life-cycle costs, including post-certification activity (PCA) contracts for certified IMS stations, the Group takes note of the continuous efforts by the PTS to standardize the services provided under PCA contracts and reiterates its call on all States Signatories to cooperate with the PTS in a joint effort to lower life cycle costs, including those related to PCA.

d) 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.

e) The Group looks forward to finalizing direct and clear guidance for noble gas background characterization, as a matter of priority. The Group looks forward to the resumption of these consultations at the next session of the PrepCom with a view to finalize it at the earliest. We recognize that the PTS has reaffirmed that it continues to observe the decision of the Commission that no campaign will be initiated in the future without guidance.

f) Regarding the International Data Center Progressive Commissioning, the Group would like to emphasize the importance of continued involvement of experts in conducting the experiments, including the participation of experts from developing countries. The Group looks forward to

further briefings on the progressive commissioning of the IMS and the IDC, the validation and acceptance test plan and the experiments conducted and planned by the PTS, noting that the milestones for progressive commission are not time bound and are requirement-based.

g) The Group welcomes the completion of the OSI programme of work for 2022-2023 and looks forward to the implementation of the OSI exercise plan for 2022-2025, including RIC 26 (Egypt), IFE 25 (Sri Lanka), BUE 24 (Hungary) and Workshop – 26 (Chile).

h) On the Radionuclide Monitoring System, the Group takes note of the continued work on the completion of ongoing installation and certification projects and the implementation of major upgrade and revalidation projects, as well as the maintenance of stations, which is carried out with Signatory States.

i) The Group notes document CTBT/PTS.INF.1685 titled “International Monitoring System Sustainment Strategy: Technical Approach” and would like to reiterate its support to the PTS efforts to ensure the operationalization of the verification regime. The Group looks forward to the relevant technical data on the IMS status to be concluded in a timely manner in order to allow for more informed discussions.

Mr. Chair,

9. The Group would like to highlight the importance of capacity building activities, especially through technical trainings, workshops and capacity building courses, and expresses its appreciation for the PTS’s efforts to continue providing and expanding capacity-building activities, through organizing online workshops and trainings. We reaffirm the continuing need for cooperation and support, including the provision of technical assistance to, inter alia, ensure that all States Signatories, in particular developing countries, have the capacity to effectively participate in the verification regime of the Treaty, and implement obtained knowledge and capacities at the national, regional and international levels.

10. The Group expresses its support for projects, such as the Technical Experts Support Programme (TESP) that facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries in the WGB sessions. The Group is convinced that such participation will greatly contribute to capacity building in our countries.

11. As part of its integrated capacity building activities, the Group calls on the Commission to continue offering States Signatories, in particular developing States, a wide range of training courses, workshops as well as hardware and software for NDCs aimed at strengthening capacities in areas relevant to the Treaty. Capacity building activities should continue to include all these elements that enable developing countries to access and analyse IMS data and International Data Centre (IDC) products.

Mr. Chair,

12. 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. The Group reiterates that these principles should be reflected in the PrepCom and its subsidiary bodies, particularly when it comes to capacity-building activities. In this regard, we encourage Working Group B to contribute to improving such representation among its officers in accordance with the above-mentioned principles.

13. The Group requests the PTS to include in its next relevant report concrete actions for the realization of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in order to improve the current representation of developing countries in the PTS.

14. In the context of the celebration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, the Group welcomes the efforts of the PTS for improving and strengthening gender balance, including through increased support for the mentoring programme for early career women in STEM coming from geographical regions which are under-represented in CTBTO staff, the application and inclusion of gender consideration in the selection of TESP candidates, capacity building, training activities and conferences with the aim to actively boost women involvement in CTBT activities.

15. The Group welcomes the efforts of the PTS for improving and strengthening of multilingualism, including, developing technical documents and organizing regional meetings in CTBTO languages other than English and looks forward to continuing the work on this matter. In this vein, the Group also welcomes the first NDC training for Spanish-speaking NDCs held in Costa Rica from 20-24 November 2023.

16. Finally, the Group looks forward to continue working constructively with you, the Vice-Chairs and the Task Leaders in order to achieve a fruitful outcome of this session.

Thank you.