



**Statement of the G-77 and China
during the Sixty-Fifth Session of Working Group A
27-28 May 2024
delivered by H.E. Ms. Laura Gil,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Colombia**

Madam Chair,

The Group of 77 and China would like to begin by expressing its deepest condolences to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the the passing of their President, Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs and other officials after the tragic helicopter crash.

Madam Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Evangelina Bernas, as new Chairperson for Working Group A and would want to assure you of the Group's full support and cooperation.
2. The Group would also like to thank the Executive Secretary Dr. Robert Floyd for his opening remarks and takes note of his report on non-verification related activities for the period from September 2023-March 2024.
3. The Group also extends its appreciation to the PTS for the timely issuance of documents for this session.
4. The Group welcomes the appointment of the new International Data Center Director, Mr Dounia Keda, and wishes him all the success in his new role and assures him our full support.

Madam Chair,

5. The Group is pleased to note that Papua New Guinea has ratified the Treaty, bringing the number of State Signatories to 187 and of ratifications to 178. 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 achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

6. The Group takes note that the Financial Statements of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for 2023 received an unqualified (unmodified) opinion from the External Auditor and welcomes that 11 recommendations agreed by the External Auditors were closed in 2023.

7. The Group takes note of the 2025 Budget Update Proposals: Initial Draft (CTBT/PTS/INF.1695, and Corr.1). The Group continues to encourage the PTS, to make every effort to maintain a minimal as possible price adjustment and to ensure that financial resources are put to best use, taking into account the importance of a zero percent real growth policy in the budget. Additionally, the Group has the following comments:

(a) The Group takes note in the 2025 Budget update proposal that the 2025 Total Regular Budget at estimated 2025 prices is \$139.73 in notional US\$ equivalent value, with an overall weighted average price adjustment of 2.4%. The Group notes that 80.6% of the 2025 Budget is allocated to verification activities

(b) The Group encourages the PTS to continue to identify savings and efficiencies in the current and future budgets. The difficult global macroeconomic circumstances continue to negatively impact on States Signatories, adding to the pertinent financial burdens and posing new challenges in particular for developing countries;

(c) The Group considers a priority the effective strengthening of capacity building and training activities, which are aimed at increasing the capabilities of States Signatories to participate in the verification regime, and reiterates its position that capacity building activities should be funded in a sufficient, predictable and sustainable manner through the Regular Budget. The Group requests the PTS to continue providing information, documents and organizing briefings on this subject inter-sessionally;

(d) 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;

(e) The Group takes note of the draft decision on the carry forward of the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) and Multiyear Funds unspent balances backed by cash as of 31 December 2023 to the financial period 2024, as soon as the corresponding amounts are final and audited;

(f) The Group is of the view that the Secretariat should continue convening necessary Expert Meetings to define the projects and elaborate the exercise plan based on challenging scenarios to be held in the future, in preparation for the integrated field exercise (IFE) 2025;

(g) The Group requests the PTS to further develop the OSI e-Library, based on the lessons learned from exercises, in addition to providing access to the OSI e-library to the authorized experts from States Signatories;

(h) The Group takes note of the Report on Multilingualism in the PTS (CTBT/PTS/INF.1704) and the progress with regards to conducting a large proportion of activities 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 and notes the efforts of the PTS providing records of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in all languages, on the ECS.

8. The Group 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. Furthermore, the Group is looking forward to the report of the quality assessment of training provided as well as measures that will be undertaken to support the participation of developing countries in in-person and virtual training programmes. The Group would also like to highlight that those activities, that are already approved and budgeted but were not carried out should be rescheduled as soon as possible.

Madam Chair,

9. The Group takes note of the 2023 Report on Human Resources Management and Equal Employment Opportunities – Women in the Provisional Technical Secretariat (CTBT/PTS/INF.1701). In this regard, 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, its subsidiary bodies, particularly when it comes to the Staff of the Organization, especially, at the Professional and higher levels, as important considerations in the recruitment process. The Group takes positive note of the efforts of the PTS in promoting work opportunities in the Commission and is encouraged that applications from the Global South have increased.

10. The Group remains concerned with the low level of representation of developing countries in the PTS. The Group looks forward to further discussing the issue of equitable geographical representation in the upcoming WGA and regularly thereafter, and therefore, while noting that the PTS continues to provide updated data, requests further steps to make progress in addressing the current persistent low representation of developing countries in the PTS and to make all necessary efforts to bring geographical representation to equitable levels.

11. The Group recognizes the efforts made to improve the representation of the staff, and encourages to continue improving gender representation at Professional and director level which stands at 37.3% according to the most recent Non-Verification Report. 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.

12. The Group looks forward to a constructive deliberation, timely and consensual conclusion of the work of this Working Group and all other subsidiary bodies of the PrepCom.

Thank you, Madam Chair.