



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SOLTANIEH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN 14-15 JUNE 2011

Mr Chairman,

1. Let me start by expressing, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our satisfaction in seeing you, Ambassador Igor Davidovic, chair the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Preparatory Commission. The Group is certain that, under your guidance, the tasks put in front of the Preparatory Commission at the present session will be concluded successfully. The Group hereby assures you of its willingness to support you in this endeavour.

2. The Group would also like to convey its appreciation to the Permanent Representative of South Africa, Ambassador Xolisa Mfundiso Mabhongo, for his impeccable tenure as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission in 2010, and for his significant contribution to the progress of the work of this plenary body.

3. The Group thanks the PTS for its efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear incidents in March 2011 and, in this context commends its cooperation with the IAEA and other organizations.

4. The Group also takes this opportunity to thank the Executive Secretary Mr Tibor Tóth for his opening statement, and reiterates its appreciation to him and the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the three following documents listed under agenda item 2: the report on verification-related activities for the period July-December 2010 (CTBT/ES/2010/4, dated 25 January 2011); the Annual Report for 2010 (CTBT/ES/2010/5, dated 1 March 2011); and the report on non-verification-related activities for the period January-March 2011 (CTBT/ES/2011/1, dated 9 May 2011).

5. The Group of 77 and China notes that momentous progress has been made to date towards bringing the CTBT to its much desired universal status, having 182 States signed the Treaty, 153 of which have ratified.

6. The Group welcomes the Science and Technology Conference that took place from 8 to 10 June 2011 at the Hofburg Palace. This event has offered diverse sectors interested in the CTBT, a forum and a possibility to interact, with ensuing benefits to the Treaty's verification regime. The Group thanks the PTS for its assistance to participants from developing countries to take part in this important conference, and welcomes further participation from developing countries in the future.

Mr Chairman,

7. The Group acknowledges the value of civil and scientific application of CTBT-related technologies, bearing in mind the fundamental purpose and specific mandate as foreseen in the Treaty. Activities that might go beyond the Treaty and the mandate of the Preparatory Commission should be reviewed by the Preparatory Commission.

8. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the report of the Thirty-Ninth Session of Working Group A (CTBT/PC-36/WGA/1, dated 25 May 2011) and its recommendations, and thanks its Chairperson, Ambassador Antonio José Guerreiro, Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil, for having, once again, deftly steered the deliberations having taken place on that occasion.

9. The Group also takes note of the report of the Thirty-Sixth Session of Working Group B (CTBT/PC-

36/WGB/1, dated 8 March 2011), and its recommendations, and thanks Mr. Hein Haak of the Netherlands, for his able chairmanship.

10. On issues falling under the purview of Working Group B, the Group would like to make the following comments:

11. The Group reiterates the importance it attaches to the capacity building and training programmes as a means of improving the ability of States Signatories to participate fully in the verification regime of the CTBT, as well as in PTS-related activities. The Group appreciates the continuing efforts of the PTS in ensuring the widest possible participation of developing countries in its capacity building and training programmes, and encourages the PTS to keep working with this fundamental objective in mind.

12. The Group has repeatedly stressed the importance of maintaining an adequate balance in the prioritization and distribution of resources across the three major programmes of the verification regime of the CTBT: the International Monitoring System, the International Data Centre, and On-Site Inspections. Therefore, it notes with satisfaction that attaining a proper balance between all elements of the verification regime and, in this context, granting overall priority to further developing the OSI component, have been identified by the PTS as key priorities in the 2012 Programme and Budget Proposals. We hope that this will yield concrete results in redressing the existing imbalance, in the overall context of the three major programmes and, within the IMS, in terms of what the Group believes has been an excessive focus on station building, which it considers detrimental to the need of duly safeguarding existing investments.

Mr. Chairman,

13. On agenda item 5, the Group takes note of the reports of Parts I and II of the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Advisory Group, and of the recommendations to the Preparatory Commission and Working Group A as contained therein (CTBT/AG-36/INF.2, dated 20 April 2011 and CTBT/AG-36/INF.3, dated 12 May 2011, respectively), and thanks the Advisory Group and its Chairman, Sir Michael Weston, for the work conducted on that occasion.

14. On agenda item 6, it is worth mentioning that, conceptually, the Group bases its position in favour of a zero-real-growth budget for the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT, on the following criteria:

- The current well advanced status of the verification system;
- The mandate of the Preparatory Commission on the provisional operation of the system;
- The actual prospects of entry into force of the treaty; and
- The need to minimize the financial burden to be borne by States Signatories.

15. However, the proposals for the Programme and Budget for 2012 as contained in the initial draft (CTBT/PTS/INF.1123) warrant additional specific considerations. The Programme and Budget for 2012 needs to be considered in conjunction with the 2012 supplementary budget for an Integrated Field Exercise (IFE) in 2014 (CTBT/PTS/INF.1123, Appendix II), in terms of the actual extent and implications of the financial burden to be borne by States Signatories.

16. The Group endorses the recommendation by Working Group B to hold the IFE in 2014, is convinced that the PTS should be provided with the necessary financial resources it needs to carry out its mandate, and is ready to engage in discussions to find a suitable mechanism to finance the IFE.

17. Nevertheless, it is also of the view that, albeit presented by the PTS as two separate documents, the 2012 Programme and Budget and the decision on the financing of IFE 2014 are to be integrally considered, in the current context of economic austerity, and that the process of establishing the verification regime of the CTBT-in which the IFE 2014 is an important element-should evolve in a prudent and feasible manner.

18. Therefore, the Group earnestly encourages the PTS to continue to explore further reductions, savings, synergies and efficiency measures, and-as requested to it by Working Group A at its Thirty-Ninth Session-to present additional alternative proposals to finance IFE 2014, and study the possibility of incorporating some elements of the latter into the Regular Budget.

19. The Group believes that the discussions at the last session of Working Group A have provided delegations with the opportunity to engage in an initial but very incipient exchange of views. As agreed on that occasion, the draft 2012 Programme and Budget proposals and options for financing of the 2014 IFE will require further consideration by Working Group A at its next session.

20. The Group hopes that States Signatories can reach consensus on a suitable mechanism to finance it. It thanks Ambassador Antonio José Guerreiro, for his disposition to hold intersessional informal consultations on these issues, and is confident that he will lead the process in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman,

21. On agenda item 7.2, the Group takes note of the document on the appointment of the Director of the Division of Administration, and the Director of the International Monitoring System Division, as recommended by the Executive Secretary to the Preparatory Commission (CTBT/PTS/INF.1132, dated 27 May 2011). The Group considers equal gender representation and balanced geographical distribution of the utmost importance, and, in this regard, recalls the request made to the Executive Secretary by the Preparatory Commission at its Fifth Session (CTBT/PC-5/1/Add.7, dated 15 April 1998), to pursue a target of equal gender representation at all levels of the Secretariat, paying due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on a wide geographical basis.

22. With these remarks, the Group of 77 and China concludes by expressing its support to the work of the Chair, and by reiterating its commitment to fruitful and constructive deliberations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.