

Statement by the African Group for the 31st Session of Working Group A of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), delivered by H.E. Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Permanent Representative of Namibia, 4-6 May 2007

Chairperson,

1 At the outset, the African Group associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China delivered by the Permanent Representative of Sudan. The Group would like to express its appreciation to the Executive Secretary for his oral and written reports and for the PTS for preparing the documentation.

2. The African Group expresses again its satisfaction in seeing you chairing the 31st Session of Working Group A and assures you of our full cooperation.

Chairperson,

4. The African Group would like to make some preliminary comments concerning the agenda items.

5. Concerning agenda item 3, the African Group expresses its appreciation to H.E. Sir John Bourn for introducing the External Auditor's report on the accounts of the PTS. The Group welcomes his unqualified opinion on the financial statement of the PTS. The Group has reviewed the accounts for 2006 and takes note that in terms of the External Auditor's report, the Commission does not face any short-term cash flow problems.

6. The African Group is however seriously concerned that a major contributor continues to pursue a selective and political approach to the Treaty which has led to the non-payment of US\$15 million. The African Group urges this State Signatory to pay the outstanding amount without delay so as to enable the CTBTO to fulfil its mandate accordingly.

Chairperson,

7. Concerning agenda item 4, the Group takes note of the 2006 Programme and Budget Performance report as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.881 and thanks the PTS for preparing this document. The Group takes note that a total of 244 stations or 76% of the IMS have been established at the end of 2006 and 190 (59%) of IMS stations are in IDC operations.

8. The African Group notes from the 2006 PBPR that more than US\$15 million of the 2006 Budget has not been spent, which is US\$3 million more than 2005 unspent Budget. The Group believes that increasing rollover of unspent funds shows that the PTS would need to prepare a more realistic and reasonable draft programme and budget for 2008 and future years. The Group agrees with the view of the Advisory Group that the actual lapse rate be included in the 2006 PBPR and next years.

9. Concerning agenda item 5, consideration of the report and the recommendations of Part II of the 28th session of the Advisory Group contained in document CTBT/AG-28/2, the Group would to stress the following issues of importance to it

10 First, on the issue of station by station budgeting recommended by the Advisory Group External Auditor, the Group the Group would appreciate if the PTS could provide more information on possible impact of this approach.

11 Secondly, the Group stresses the importance of a comprehensive review of Unliquidated Obligations (ULOs) in the CIF to assess the underlying reasons as to why huge amounts were outstanding, in particular in the light of the reported overall excess of income over expenditure. The Group is particularly concerned that this situation suggests that the budget may be unrealistic.

12 Thirdly, regarding the suggested changes to the Financial Regulations and Rules to take into consideration the proposed multiyear financial mechanism for IMS sustainment, the African Group is of the view that the decision on these changes should be taken in parallel with the decisions on all other related issues.

13 Concerning agenda item 6, consideration of the draft budget proposals for 2008 as contained in document CTBT/PTS/INF.880, the African Group would like to reiterate its position that the budget proposed should reflect zero real growth with no additional financial burden on States Signatories with any overall programmatic increases. The Group reserves its right to present further comments on this issue at a later stage.

14 The Group is also of the view that the 4 days reduction of the meetings of some Policy making Organs which has resulted to some savings be reflected in the 2008 budget. The Group also expects that 7.9 million of savings as a result of the ULO's to be taken back to the State Signatories for their further decision. , More important, the Group believes that budget proposal should take into account the actual prospects of the entry into force of the Treaty.

Chairperson,

15. The African Group is of the view that the PTS should make a realistic assessment of the initial draft 2008 Programme and Budget and identify savings where possible. An area where savings could be identified is in the CTBTO's promotional activities. The Group agrees to the paramount importance of promoting the Early Entry into Force of the Treaty, but believes that this should not lead to unnecessary glossy publications and promotional material. The Group urges the PTS to identify possible savings in this area.

Chairperson,

16. Regarding the pilot project for financing participation of technical experts from developing countries to the technical meetings of the WGB, the Group notes that the available resources to finance the technical experts to WGB meetings will be sufficient only for 2007. The Group would like to recall its earlier position for a secure and predictable funding mechanism for at least 9 experts for 2008 and beyond. The Group once again expresses its appreciation to those State Signatories that contributed funds for the pilot project and would like to request the Executive Secretary to continue his efforts for mobilising additional funds.

Thank you Mr. Chairman!