Policy making is effected through the Policy Making Organs (PMOs). These are the vehicles by which the CTBTO Preparatory Commission makes and implements decisions concerning the work of the organization.

The plenary body of the Commission, which is composed of all States Signatories, provides political guidance and oversight to the Provisional Technical Secretariat. The plenary is the primary PMO and is assisted by two other PMOs called Working Group A and Working Group B.

Working Group A deals with budgetary and administrative matters facing the organization, while Working Group B considers scientific and technical issues related to the Treaty. Both Working Groups submit proposals and recommendations for consideration and adoption by the Commission.

In addition, an Advisory Group of qualified experts serves in a supporting role, advising the Commission through its Working Groups on financial, budgetary and associated administrative matters.
HIGHLIGHTS IN 2008

EXPANSION of the pilot project to facilitate participation of experts from developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission

REAPPOINTMENT of the Chairperson of Working Group A for a further two years and the Chairperson of Working Group B for a further three years

ADVANCES in establishing the Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission.

MEETINGS IN 2008

In 2008, the Preparatory Commission was chaired by Ambassador Hans Lundborg, Permanent Representative of Sweden. The Commission met in plenary twice, from 23 to 24 June at its Thirtieth Session and from 17 to 18 November at its Thirty-First Session.

Working Group A was chaired by Ambassador Abdulkadir Bin Rimdap (Nigeria) and held its Thirty-Third Session from 2 to 3 June and its Thirty-Fourth Session from 20 to 21 October. Working Group B was chaired by Mr Hein Haak (Netherlands) and also held two sessions: its Thirtieth Session from 12 to 29 February and its Thirty-First Session from 25 August to 12 September. The Advisory Group, chaired by Mr André Gué (France), held the first and second parts of its Thirtieth Session from 21 to 25 April and from 13 to 16 May, and its Thirty-First Session from 15 to 19 September.

At a special session held on 12 February, the Commission decided to reappoint Ambassador Rimdap as Chairperson of Working Group A for a term of two years. At its Thirty-First Session, the Commission reappointed Mr Haak as Chairperson of Working Group B for a further three year term. At the same session, the Commission also extended the current term of office of the Chairperson of the Advisory Group, Mr Gué, by one month until 15 June 2009.

EXPANDING THE PARTICIPATION OF EXPERTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In 2008, the PTS continued the implementation of a pilot project, initiated in 2007, to facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission. The stated aim of this pilot project is to strengthen the universal character of the Commission and capacity building in developing countries.

The PTS introduced a number of improvements to the implementation of the pilot project in 2008. These included the organization of meetings between the experts, representatives of donor countries and the PTS during each session of Working Group B to facilitate an exchange of views on technical issues and on progress in project implementation.

The project was expanded in 2008 to support an additional three experts, bringing the total number supported to six (one each from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Peru and Thailand). For the first time, an expert from a least developed country was supported under the pilot project.

The pilot project was financed in 2008 by voluntary contributions from Austria, China, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey and the United Kingdom.
The six experts took part in sessions of Working Group B and other technical meetings, including the NDC Evaluation Workshop in May. In addition, the experts benefited from a series of technical briefings and discussions with the PTS on key verification related issues. They also participated in one of the acceptance tests of the new PTS e-learning system. The expert from Kenya led discussions as Task Leader for Issues Related to NDCs at both sessions of Working Group B.

On the basis of an implementation report prepared by the PTS, at its November session the Commission welcomed the successful continuation of the pilot project.

**SUPPORTING THE POLICY MAKING ORGANS**

The PTS is the body that executes the decisions adopted by the Commission. It is multinational in composition: staff are recruited from States Signatories on as wide a geographical basis as possible. As far as the meetings of the PMOs are concerned, the role of the PTS is to provide substantive and organizational support. From organizing conference facilities and arranging interpretation to drafting official documents of the various sessions and advising the Chairpersons, the PTS is a vital element in the work of the PMOs.

The PTS continued its preparation for the holding of a 2009 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in New York, and in this regard has established a regular line of communication with the United Nations Secretariat. In addition, the PTS provided substantive and organizational support to the coordinators of the Article XIV process in holding informal consultations of States ratifiers.

**Improving Official Documentation**

In issuing the Medium Term Plan for 2009–2013 and the 2009 Programme and Budget on a secure web site known as the Experts Communication System (ECS), the PTS established a new standard of transparency and accountability by including in the electronic files of these planning documents KPIs that were hyperlinked to sources of real time performance data. These changes were made as part of an overall effort to move towards results based management.

**Information System on Progress in Fulfilling the Mandate of the Treaty**

Advances were made in establishing the Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission (ISHTAR). Using hyperlinks to the official documentation of the Commission...
as its basis, the aim of the ISHTAR project is to monitor progress achieved in accordance with the mandate of the Treaty, the Resolution establishing the Commission and the guidance of the PMOs. Its overall purpose is to enable the Commission to determine which tasks remain to be completed in terms of preparations for the establishment of the CTBTO at entry into force.

Creating a Virtual Working Environment

The PTS prides itself on its ability to provide a virtual working environment for those unable to attend regular meetings of the PMOs. State-of-the-art technologies are employed to transmit the proceedings of each official plenary meeting around the globe in real time. Meetings are recorded and transmitted live via the ECS before being archived for reference purposes. In addition, supporting documents related to each particular session are distributed to States Signatories through the ECS, and participants are notified of new documents by email alerts. In 2008, the video streaming equipment used for the live transmissions was upgraded to improve its reliability and versatility and raise the image quality.