Policy Making

The plenary body of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, which is composed of all States Signatories, provides political guidance and oversight to the Provisional Technical Secretariat. The plenary, as the Policy Making Organ, is assisted by two Working Groups.

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 2009

- Extension of the project to promote the participation of developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission
- Appointment of Mr Michael Weston (United Kingdom) as Chairperson of the Advisory Group for three years
- Changes to the system of official documentation and further advances in establishing the Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission

MEETINGS IN 2009

In 2009, the Thirty-Second Session of the Preparatory Commission was held on 8–9 June and was chaired by Ambassador Peter Shannon, Permanent Representative of Australia. At its Thirty-Second Session, the Commission appointed Mr Michael Weston (United Kingdom) as the Chairperson of the Advisory Group for a term of three years starting from 16 June 2009. The Thirty-Third Session of the Commission was held on 16–17 November with Ambassador Michael Potts, the new Permanent Representative of Australia, as Chairperson.

Working Group A was chaired by Ambassador Abdulkadir Bin Rindap (Nigeria) and held its Thirty-Fifth Session from 14 to 15 May and its Thirty-Sixth Session from 5 to 6 October. Working Group B was chaired by Mr Hein Haak (Netherlands) and held its Thirty-Second Session from 9 to 27 February and its Thirty-Third Session from 17 August to 4 September. From 11 to 12 May, Working Group B held an extraordinary session to assess the reports by the PTS and others on evaluation of the IFE. The Advisory Group, chaired by Mr André Gué (France), held the first and second parts of its Thirty-Second Session from 20 to 24 April and from 4 to 8 May. From 14 to 17 September, the group held its Thirty-Third Session, which was chaired by its new Chairperson, Michael Weston.
EXPANDING THE PARTICIPATION OF EXPERTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The PTS continued the implementation of a 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 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 project. These included the provision to newly selected experts of a package of basic information material on the Treaty and the work of the Commission, and the identification of possible regional technical meetings and workshops in which the experts could participate.

In 2009, two experts supported in 2007 and 2008 left the project and five new experts were selected, bringing the total number of experts supported to nine for the first time (one each from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Turkmenistan). Experts from two least developed countries were therefore supported under the project.

The experts took part in sessions of Working Group B and other technical meetings, including OSI Workshop-16 and the NDC Evaluation Workshop in May and the ISS Conference in June. In addition, the experts benefited from a series of technical briefings and discussions with the PTS on key verification related issues. The expert from Kenya led discussions as the Task Leader for Issues Related to NDCs at both of the regular sessions of Working Group B.

The project was financed in 2009 by voluntary contributions from Austria, China, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. In addition, a voluntary contribution was received from the OPEC Fund for International Development.

On the basis of an implementation report prepared by the PTS, at its November session the Commission expressed its appreciation to the donor countries for their contributions and to the PTS for its reports on, and management of, the project. Moreover, the Commission decided to continue the project for a further three years on the basis of the decision made by the Commission at its Twenty-Seventh Session and of the management guidelines and selection criteria that were developed at the end of 2006, and subject to availability of sufficient funds through voluntary contributions.

SUPPORTING THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

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 Commission and its subsidiary bodies 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 Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

The PTS provided substantive and organizational support to the coordinators of the Article XIV process in connection with the holding of informal consultations of
States ratifiers. It similarly supported the 2009 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, which was held in New York in September.

Improving Official Documentation

Following consultations in 2008 with the Chairpersons of the Commission and Working Groups A and B, in 2009 the PTS introduced several changes to the system of official documentation. In addition to lowering costs, the changes are intended to facilitate the work of delegations and of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies by making the system more user friendly. The major change was the reduction in the number of documents annexed to reports of the Commission.

Information System on Progress in Fulfilling the Mandate of the Treaty

Further 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 Commission and its subsidiary bodies. 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 provides a virtual working environment for those unable to attend regular meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. 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 Experts Communication System (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.