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 2011

Continuation of the project to promote the participation of developing countries in official technical meetings of the Commission

Appointment of Ambassador Jargalsaikhan Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia) as Chairperson of Working Group A and reappointment of Mr Hein Haak (Netherlands) as Chairperson of Working Group B

Further advances in establishing the Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission (ISHTAR)
MEETINGS IN 2011

In 2011, the Thirty-Sixth and Thirty-Seventh Sessions of the Preparatory Commission were held on 14-15 June and 24 October respectively. The sessions were chaired by Ambassador Igor Davidović, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Working Group A was chaired by Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro (Brazil) and held its Thirty-Ninth Session from 23 to 24 May and its Fortieth Session on 3 October. Working Group B was chaired by Mr Hein Haak (Netherlands) and held its Thirty-Sixth Session from 14 February to 4 March and its Thirty-Seventh Session from 22 August to 9 September. Joint meetings of Working Groups A and B were held on 28 February and 5 September. In addition, informal open-ended consultations on various Working Group B issues were held from 15 to 19 August. The Advisory Group, chaired by Mr Michael Weston (United Kingdom), held the first and second parts of its Thirty-Sixth Session from 18 to 20 April and from 9 to 12 May and its Thirty-Seventh Session from 12 to 15 September.

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.

In 2011, four experts supported in 2009 and 2010 left the project and four new experts were selected, so that the total number of experts supported continued to be 10 (one each from Algeria, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea and South Africa). 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 S&T2011 in June and the 2011 NDC Evaluation Workshop in October. In addition, the experts benefited from technical discussions with the PTS on key verification related issues. The expert from Kenya continued to lead discussions as the Task Leader for Issues Related to NDCs at both of the regular sessions of Working Group B. Moreover, the experts from Brazil and Madagascar were appointed by the Chairperson of Working Group B at its Thirty-Seventh Session as new Task Leaders.

The project was financed in 2011 by voluntary contributions from Austria, China, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom, as well as from the OPEC Fund for International Development. New voluntary contributions were received in 2011 from Austria, Norway, South Africa and the OPEC Fund for International Development.

On the basis of an implementation report prepared by the PTS, at its October 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.

**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, thus facilitating the decision making process. From organizing conference facilities and arranging interpretation for the meetings and translation of papers 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, as well as the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT (‘Article XIV conference’), which was held in New York on 23 September 2011.

**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. In 2011, the PTS continued to distribute on DVDs all documents of and presentations to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies at their sessions.

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

Further advances were made in establishing 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 and the first session of the Conference of the States Parties.