The plenary body of the Commission, which is composed of all States Signatories, provides political guidance and oversight to the Secretariat. The plenary is assisted by two Working Groups.

Working Group A (WGA) deals with budgetary and administrative matters, while WGB considers scientific and technical issues related to the Treaty. Both Working Groups submit proposals and recommendations for consideration and adoption by the plenary meeting of the Commission.

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

Highlights in 2014

- Participation of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in the Forty-Second Session of the Commission
- Appointment of a new Chairperson of Working Group B
- Seeking new approaches to the funding of the activities of the Commission
Meetings in 2014

The Commission and its subsidiary bodies each met in two regular sessions in 2014. There were also joint meetings of WGA and WGB on 24 February and 25 August and a Special Session of the Commission took place in August.

Among the major issues address by the Commission during 2014 were promotion of the Treaty; procedures for appointment of the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies; introducing biennial budgeting; multiyear funding; preparation for the 2014 Integrated Field Exercise; progress in completion of the International Monitoring System; and changes to Staff Regulations and Rules to introduce short term appointments. The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, participated in the Forty-Second Session of the Commission, in June.

The Commission also appointed Mr. Joachim Schulze as the new Chairperson of Working Group B starting from 17 March 2015.

Supporting the Commission and Its Subsidiary Bodies

The Secretariat is the body that executes the decisions adopted by the Commission. It is multinational in composition: its staff is recruited from States Signatories on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The Secretariat provides substantive and organizational support for the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and in the periods between sessions, thus facilitating the decision making process. With tasks ranging from organizing conference facilities and arranging interpretation and translation to drafting official documents of the various sessions, planning the annual schedule of sessions, and providing substantive and procedural advice to the Chairpersons, the Secretariat is a vital element in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

Virtual Working Environment

Through the Experts Communication System (ECS), the Commission provides a virtual working environment for those unable to attend its regular meetings. Using state of the art technology, the ECS records and transmits the proceedings of each official plenary meeting live around the world.
the globe. Meetings are then archived for reference purposes. In addition, the ECS distributes supporting documents for each session to States Signatories, and alerts participants of new documents by email.

In January 2014 the ECS was integrated into the single sign-on (SSO) infrastructure of the Commission. With the adoption of a new, more interactive and collaborative, method of work by WGB, the ECS has become even more important as a tool for continuous and inclusive discussion among States Signatories and experts on complex scientific and technical issues related to the verification regime.

As part of the virtual paper approach, through which the Commission is seeking to limit its output of printed documentation, the Secretariat provided a ‘print on demand’ service at all sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. In place of supplying printed copies of all documents to each participant, this service enabled delegates to print copies of those documents that they required directly from their computers and mobile devices during the meetings. The Secretariat continued to distribute on CD 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

The Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission (ISTHAR) monitors progress made in meeting the mandate of the Treaty, the Resolution establishing the Commission, and the guidance of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. It uses hyperlinks to the official documentation of the Commission to provide up to date information on the tasks that remain to be completed in preparing for the establishment of the CTBTO at entry into force and the first session of the Conference of the States Parties.

The ISTHAR interface has now been integrated into the SSO infrastructure and it continued to be available to all users of the ECS.

Participation of Experts from Developing Countries

The Commission continued to implement a project, initiated in 2007, to facilitate the participation of experts from developing countries in its official technical meetings. The aims of this project are to strengthen the universal character of the Commission and to build capacity in developing countries. In October 2012 the Commission extended the project for a further three years (2013–2015), subject to availability of sufficient voluntary contributions. A detailed annual report on the status of implementation of the project was issued in October.

Ten experts were supported under the project in the first half of 2014. They came from Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Niger, Paraguay and Vanuatu. In the second half of 2014, two new experts, from Ecuador and Yemen, replaced the outgoing experts from Brazil and Kenya. The experts took part in the Forty-Second and Forty-Third Sessions of WGB, including formal meetings, meetings of the expert groups and meetings of their respective geographical groups. In addition, the experts benefited from technical discussions with the Secretariat and the WGB Chairperson on key verification related issues.

The project has supported a total of 26 participants, including 6 females, since its inception in 2007. The participants came from 8 States in Africa (Algeria,
Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia), 7 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru), 4 in the Middle East and South Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Yemen), and 7 in South East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East (Indonesia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, Vanuatu). Seven of these are least developed countries.

In 2014 the project was financed by the most recent voluntary contributions, received from China, Norway, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Turkey and the European Union. The Commission continues to seek additional voluntary contributions to ensure the financial sustainability of the project.